

Tony Blair

On Leadership

Lessons for the 21st Century

Tony Blair

On Leadership

Lessons for the 21st Century

Also by Tony Blair

A Journey

TONY BLAIR

On Leadership

Lessons for the 21st Century

 CROWN
NEW YORK

Copyright © 2024 by Tony Blair
Excerpt from *A Journey* copyright © 2010, 2011 by Tony Blair

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Crown, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York. First published in 2024 by Hutchinson Heinemann, an imprint of Cornerstone. Cornerstone is part of Penguin Random House group of companies.

crownpublishing.com

Penguin Random House values and supports copyright. Copyright fuels creativity, encourages diverse voices, promotes free speech, and creates a vibrant culture. Thank you for buying an authorized edition of this book and for complying with copyright laws by not reproducing, scanning, or distributing any part of it in any form without permission. You are supporting writers and allowing Penguin Random House to continue to publish books for every reader. Please note that no part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems.

CROWN and the Crown colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin Random House LLC.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

ISBN 9780593799796
Ebook ISBN 9780593799819

Editor: Madhulika Sikka
Editorial assistant: Fariza Hawke
Production editor: Joyce Wong
Production manager: Heather Williamson
Publicist: Penny Simon
Marketer: Chantelle Walker

Cover design by Ceara Elliot

ep_prh_7.0_148168993_c0_r1

Contents

[Dedication](#)

[Introduction: Leadership and the Science of Governing](#)

[PART I: TAKING POWER](#)

- [1. Be the Leader with the Plan](#)
- [2. Make the Centre Strong](#)
- [3. Prioritisation: Try to Do Everything and You Will Likely Do Nothing](#)
- [4. Good Policy Is \(Nearly\) Always Good Politics](#)
- [5. It's All About the People](#)
- [6. Curb Your Bureaucracy but Cultivate It](#)

[PART II: DELIVERY](#)

- [7. Democracy or Not, It's All About Delivery](#)
- [8. The Supreme Importance of Strategy](#)
- [9. Be a Change-maker, Not a Place-holder](#)
- [10. *Le Suivi*: Delivering](#)
- [11. Sugaring the Long-term Changes: Quick Wins](#)
- [12. Nothing Is Inevitable in Politics, Neither Defeat nor Victory](#)

[PART III: POLICY LESSONS](#)

- [13. Your First Duty: Keeping People Safe](#)
- [14. Lessons for the Economy](#)
- [15. The Rule of Law](#)
- [16. The Plague of Ideology](#)

[PART IV: KEEPING UP WITH A CHANGING WORLD: THE TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY](#)

[TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION](#)

- [17. The Technology Revolution and the Reimagined State](#)
- [18. Hold the Press! Something Big and Breaking Is Going On](#)
- [19. Applying Tech: A Reimagined State in Action](#)

[20. Building the Infrastructure](#)

[21. Derangement, Not Rearrangement: What Government Can Learn from Tech](#)

[PART V: FOREIGN POLICY](#)

[22. International Affairs: The Importance of Being Consistent](#)

[23. In Foreign Policy, Personal Relationships Are Built on Trust](#)

[24. Navigating the Straits Between the USA and China \(and Don't Forget India\)](#)

[25. Foreign Policy Is Becoming Domestic Policy](#)

[26. How to Negotiate](#)

[PART VI: COMMUNICATIONS IN A NEW MEDIA ENVIRONMENT](#)

[27. Strategic Communication: The Difference Between a Narrative and a Press Release](#)

[28. How to Handle Criticism, Twenty-first-Century Style](#)

[29. Scandal](#)

[30. Politics in the Era of Social Media](#)

[PART VII: YOU THE LEADER](#)

[31. Avoid Paranoia, Even Though They Are Out to Get You](#)

[32. The Hinterland](#)

[33. Hubris and Nemesis](#)

[34. You Are Never as Knowledgeable or as Smart as You Think You Are](#)

[35. It's Better to Be Respected than Loved, Feared or "Trusted"](#)

[36. Ambition: Calculate Too Much, and You Miscalculate](#)

[37. Don't Make Enemies Deliberately; You Will Make Enough Accidentally](#)

[38. Create a Constituency, Not a Clique](#)

[39. Protect Your Legacy](#)

[40. Leaving with Grace](#)

[Postscript](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Index](#)

[Excerpt from *A Journey*](#)

*To the wonderful staff at my Institute who are making change
happen*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership and the Science of Governing

No Leader I ever met, who succeeded, did so just by being a “LEADER.” They did it by hard work, by application, by poring over the detail, by agonising before deciding, by harnessing their self-doubt as well as their self-confidence.

And by curiosity. By a willingness to learn. By a relentless pursuit of the right answer, burrowing all the way down to the core, if necessary, to get it.

I was for ten years head of the British government and have spent almost twenty afterwards, through my institute, helping governments and Leaders in around forty different countries all over the world. I learnt a lot doing it and I have learnt a lot watching others do it.

Leadership is always a journey. Over time, I have deciphered a pattern in that journey broken into three stages.

In the first flush of taking power, Leaders are all ears. They know they know nothing or little of what governing truly means. They listen eagerly.

In the second stage, when they have become acclimatised to the rhythm of it all, they know enough to think they know everything. They’re impatient with listening. They’re the boss. Who can know more than them?

The third stage is that of maturity when they come to the realisation that what they know is not the sum total of political knowledge; that there are things—many of them—that they don’t know. Once again, with more humility, they listen and learn.

That sweet arrival at discernment is unfortunately usually achieved by bitter experience.

The distance between the three stages can be long or short.

Many Leaders never get past stage two. And this is most often where the mistakes are made.

This book is about how, by studying the lessons and science of governing, Leaders can shorten the learning curve, steepen it and get to stage three faster and in better shape.

—

Governments have been around forever, of course. But the twentieth century saw an unprecedented expansion in what they do and in what the public expects of them.

In early-nineteenth-century Britain, the role of the state was very circumscribed. Governments raised taxes to pay for a limited set of duties that revolved mainly around defence. There was little or no public education system; no government-mandated healthcare system; no pensions and little welfare. The administration of law and order was rudimentary. The concept of social care was unknown. During the course of the nineteenth century state provision developed, but even in 1900, government expenditure accounted for only about 12 per cent of GDP.

Since then, as government has progressively taken on more and more duties and responsibilities, that figure has risen to over 40 per cent. Most modern developed nations have built their public realm in much the same way. And developing nations are following suit.

People now rely on their government to organise—and often fund—the education of their children, to provide care when they're sick, and financial support when they're old or unemployed. They expect their government to keep the streets safe and the nation protected. They look to it to pass laws to administer an ever-more complex business environment, and to regulate

everything from food production to waste management to the promotion of products to environmental and climate issues.

As a result, government today is a vast, sprawling, intrusive, all-encompassing behemoth in our lives. We may fiercely debate its size and purpose, but the reality is that it is here to stay, and at a level which makes how it functions a significant part of how our lives are led.

Yet, even though that truth is inescapable, the odd thing is how confined and rarefied is the debate about what we might call the science of governing: how the machine works and how it might be made to work better.

I don't mean we don't debate the competence or otherwise of particular governments or debate their policies. We do. But we don't focus much on the principles of what good governance looks like, what works and what doesn't, whether there are common rules or lessons we could learn. In other words, we don't pause to consider how to extract the best from this behemoth.

It is true that every country's circumstances are different. And I find a very common belief among political Leaders, at least at the beginning of their mandate, is that their nation is *sui generis* and that there is a limit to what they can learn from others.

But the processes of government are firmly similar across nations. The challenges are often the same. The manner of governing—effective or ineffective—has the same characteristics. Governments also have decades of experience to draw on. It is therefore possible, and from the point of view of success essential, to be aware of—to understand—the various elements of government before taking on the burden of responsibility for the nation.

The way government functions, how it creates the right structures for decision-making, how it organises itself, how the leadership spends its time and uses its bandwidth for governing as opposed to politicking, is its own science.

Mastering this science is quite literally the difference between governments—and, therefore, often countries—that succeed and governments—and countries—that fail.

I do an exercise when talking to new Leaders whereby I invite them to consider countries which are next to each other and similar in terms of population, natural resources and opportunities, and then compare them.

Poland and Ukraine (before the war). Rwanda and Burundi. Myanmar and Malaysia. For all Colombia's problems, compare it with Venezuela. Or compare Kuwait with the most successful Gulf States. And then there's the greatest governing laboratory experiment available to humankind, the Korean peninsula—North and South Korea.

For each successful country, there will have been a turning point, a moment when they moved ahead, developed, liberated potential and expanded.

How were the turning-point decisions formulated? How were they translated from vision to reality? Each step didn't just involve a thought but a way of proceeding: there was a policy, a framework for implementation, an executive process of delivery. Of course, there was also leadership.

So you would be unwise as a Leader to embark upon a major reform without closely studying how other Leaders facing similar problems and challenges have handled them. Governing offers lessons; it has attributes applicable as generalities. Even its idiosyncrasies have common elements. It repays study.

In a democracy we elect the head of government. There are, however, no other qualifications required for governing: I became prime minister without any prior experience of government. Leaders don't work their way up, learning as they go, with objective assessment of capacity; they just arrive and get on with it. The same is true of many, if not most, ministers, even though they run big departments and control large budgets. It's also true of countries which are not democratic: the new leadership takes office with the same discordance between power and experience; and their ministers are in the same boat.

In any other walk of life, most of which are of significantly less importance to the average citizen than government, no one would dream of such a thing. We would think it irresponsible, unwise and highly hazardous.

In fairness to the electorate, they can't really be expected to have a precise view of the fitness to govern of those they elect. They have a general opinion, of course, and in a democracy they choose on that basis.

But even though, when a new Leader comes to office, they may well be lacking in experience—their team likewise—they can compensate for the inherent irrationality of the system that got them there. There is a playbook they can examine; there are clear lessons which they can learn. Even if the journey is one which they have never made before, others have; there are route maps which can be followed, warning signs which can be read, and lived experience which can illuminate what governing really entails.

Such study can't compensate for the absence of leadership. But it is surely better if Leaders are educated by the available learning of how others have fared carrying the burden of leadership.

Every Leader will confront the challenges of devising strategy, policy, delivery, building the right team, overcoming the interests which stand in the way of reform, moving their bureaucracy from inertia to impact, of steering the domestic Ship of State through storms of external events.

So, whatever their natural qualities of leadership, there should be room for the taught qualities of leadership, for the tangible skills of design and implementation as well as the more ethereal element of character.

Politics is part philosophy, part performance and part practicality. The last is more mundane but it is the one which finally makes the difference.

—

For the person at the top, there is a difference between being a Leader and leadership. Or certainly a difference between being “A Leader” and merely the person occupying the position of leader.

Leaders arrive in positions of leadership by many varied routes: some by calculation, some by accident, some through circumstance, some through crisis and some through courage; often it is an amalgam of all these.

But only a few really deserve the title “Leader”; i.e., once there, they exercise what we call—as a compliment—leadership.

I have come to the conclusion that the attributes of leadership are the same whatever the leadership position—from running a country to managing a football team to heading a company or indeed any type of organisation, be it a shop or a community centre.

A Leader steps out when others step back. The mantle of responsibility is being passed around and the Leader willingly takes it upon their shoulders. OK, sometimes they drape it graciously around them and sometimes they snatch it before anyone else can get near! But in either case or somewhere in between, they’re prepared to wear it.

But that merely gets you the position of Leader. Being “A Leader” means something different.

Leaders have the courage not to go with the flow. They speak up when others stay silent. They act when others hesitate. They take the risk, not because they fail to identify it as risk but because they believe a higher purpose means the risk should be taken.

They’re prepared to say what needs to be said, including to their own supporters.

This is an essential part of political leadership, without which little gets achieved. Any reasonably intelligent politician knows what their public wants to hear. So, saying it is easy: playing to the crowd, loving their warmth, feeling their praise, stirring them; watching as they follow each cadence, every gesture, the rhythm of the speech building in intensity, the waves of applause and approbation. Since time immemorial, politicians have made such speeches, delivered such lines, and now they tweet such sharp 280-character reminders of allegiance.

This performative politics has its place. Few Leaders will survive without such moments. Creating them requires talent. But it isn't the same as leadership.

Standing in front of a crowd that is expecting to be pleased but instead being prepared to displease it. Spelling out the truth rather than the shibboleth. Persuading, not placating, the audience that is not naturally on your side. Addressing the head and not the heart of those who are.

The willingness to take not just the mantle but what goes with it should that mantle be worn seriously: the criticism as well as the adulation, the necessity of decision and not simply debate; of substance as well as shine; of advancing and not just being; of action and not mere analysis; to resolve the problem and not simply articulate it.

And to keep going even when it looks like defeat is as plausible an outcome as victory; to retreat tactically, but never strategically.

This is leadership.

And to realise that giving people what they want is not the goal of leadership.

Surprising thought? Especially for a political Leader?

Surely doing what "the people" want is what politics is all about. No?

No. Now such a surprising thought needs careful clarification. Of course, the goal is to improve the lives of the people. To make them better off, happier, more able to fulfil their dreams and aspirations.

But that is not the same as giving them what they want at any one moment of time, of chasing down each surge of opinion and trying to meet it, of scanning the polls and acting accordingly, of agreeing to every demand rather than assessing its reasonableness, of measuring the validity of a point of view by the vehemence with which it is expressed.

The Leader sets out for the people what they need and not simply what they want. Otherwise, the Leader is just a follower.

I love the old line of Henry Ford, when asked about giving people what they wanted: "If I had asked people what they wanted, they would have said

faster horses.” In a similar vein, Steve Jobs said: “You can’t just ask customers what they want and then try to give it to them; by the time you get it built, they’ll want something new.”

What applies in business applies also in politics.

To think of this as elitist is to misunderstand fundamentally the correct relationship between Leader and led. The Leader should do what he/she believes is in the interests of the people. If the people end up disliking the outcome, sack the Leader.

But the job of the Leader is to lead.

Some of what is described in the pages that follow is about the business of leadership—how to determine priorities, construct the right policy, build a good team; it’s about how to handle the stress and strain of governing.

All these things make for a more successful time as Leader. And no amount of courage can overcome a debilitating limitation of competence.

But courage—doing what is right, not what is easy, being prepared to be unpopular as well as popular—is an almost inevitable accompaniment of successful Leaders.

This is for the very matter-of-fact reason that true Leaders are change-makers. And change is the hardest challenge of governing.

Change is resisted. Many have often tried and failed.

So stepping out to take on the challenge requires courage.

Think of any of the great Leaders, from the icons like Mandela to the country-transformers like Lee Kuan Yew, they all had to strike positions which brought opprobrium. Yet they persevered, frequently against the odds, not blindly but determinedly.

Any Leader who has ever attempted a great reform has known its price: the depletion of political capital; the opening up of opportunity to adversaries; the dislike, even hatred, of those opposed to the reform; the pressure on you, those around you, even your family, your friends; at times, the gnawing anxiety of whether it’s really worth it.

Though you know before you start that there will be pain, it is still curiously surprising and deeply uncomfortable when the pain kicks in.

Dealing with all this is the obvious definition of political courage.

But many of the things I talk about in the following pages, which might seem better defined as competence, also necessitate courage. Choosing the right team and keeping them loyal, for example.

All Leaders have an ego. But recognising your weaknesses and compensating for them, putting that ego in its box, relegating it behind leading effectively—that is a type of bravery.

Going outside your comfort zone, embracing new ideas, new people, new ways of looking at the world, all these make for better government, but they also reveal something about the character and the courage of the Leader.

Being honest with yourself when you have let others down, being able to say sorry and mean it, not holding a grudge, forgiving even when forgetting is hard or impossible, all these may help you survive as Leader, but they also necessitate the personal courage to be self-critical and self-aware.

One final reflection: this is not a book about my qualities or lack of them as a Leader. Rather, it is about what I have learnt.

What I achieved as a Leader is debatable and debated! But that is not the point of this book. What is offered here is not an example but a lesson. Naturally, my mistakes or achievements are part of the context for what follows. But they aren't the start or end point.

—

This book is about lessons in governance, about leadership, and how leaders can become “Leaders.”

PART 1

Taking Power

CHAPTER ONE

Be the Leader with the Plan

Every government, if it wants to be successful, if it wants to navigate the treacherous political landscape which will be its habitat, needs a plan. A route map. A destination.

And the Leader has to be in the driving seat.

George Kennan, the distinguished American diplomat who defined the USA policy of containment towards the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 50s, once remarked (paraphrasing Lewis Carroll and *Through the Looking-Glass*): “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.”

It’s essential the Leader does know where they’re going. They’re driving the bus. Drive it with purpose and speed, the passengers will be sitting behind the driver giving unwanted or misplaced advice, with varying degrees of politeness—but nonetheless sitting in their seats. If for one moment the bus stops for the driver to ask directions and the passengers get off and start discussing it all, believe me they will never get back on that bus.

The word “government” is derived from the Greek *kubernao*, meaning to pilot a ship, as in Plato’s phrase “the Ship of State.” To steer a course, governments need a plan.

A “plan” is not the same as a collection of desirable objectives or highfalutin visions. Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of West Germany between 1974 and 1982, famously cautioned that politicians with “visions” should go and see a doctor.

A “plan” is a route map for governing. It sets out the destination, the milestones and, above all, the priorities. It forms the “why” and not simply the “what” or “how.”

It focuses the mind of government; indeed in a certain sense it creates the mind of government.

The preparation that goes into drawing it up is intense. Bad plan: bad government.

It needn’t and probably can’t set out every detail. But it should describe accurately the essentials of what the Leader wants to achieve; it should act to mobilise the government, give direction to ministers, and be underwritten with a clear narrative.

It should allow the observer to know: what the Leader thinks about the state of the country; what is wrong; what should be put right; and the core principles of how the “putting right” will be done.

Fashioned correctly such a plan serves multiple purposes. Of course, it sets out a clear journey—we know where we’re meant to be going at least. But, more than that, politically it defines the agenda. People can be for it or against it; but everyone is obliged to define themselves around it.

I always used to say that the thing that would make me feel most electorally vulnerable, was if I saw a governing plan coming down the track at me, which was better than the one I had.

Provided that the plan is properly worked out and is not just a wish list of aspirations, it becomes the pole of political debate. This calms the governing party and unnerves the opposition.

But working it out is more complex than it might appear. Crucially, it has to establish PRIORITIES: if you try to do everything you will likely end up doing nothing.

The plan should identify those things the Leader thinks are vital, that define success or failure for the project of governing, that show where energy will be principally directed, that reveal what the government is trying to keep and what it is determined to change.

Often these changes demand structural reform on a large scale. My experience of governing is that changes usually fit into two categories. First, there are changes which are one stroke of the legislative or administrative pen—such as abolition of a tax or setting a minimum wage. They're important. But the process of government in respect of them is relatively straightforward.

But then, second, there are the changes of a systemic nature—reform of healthcare, welfare, privatisation of a major state utility, for example—and these changes involve painstaking analysis of the system, the precise changes you want to make and their relationship to the system as it currently operates; they involve managing a range of different interests, all of which will fight the change or find ways to diminish or neuter it.

These changes are the tough ones; they will take time, they mean using up political capital, and you can't do too many. Hence, as I will describe, the need to prioritise.

The plan should at least give clarity of direction on these reforms, since beyond any doubt these are not just the hardest to do in practical terms, but the hardest for you to persuade the public that they need to be done.

They should begin as early as possible in the mandate because they take time.

And here democracy has set itself a challenge.

I reckon it takes ten years to change a country. And that is ten years of focused change-making. At a minimum. Fifteen is better and twenty optimum.

One president I work with came to power as the first person elected democratically in his country after a period of dictatorship; and to mark his determination not to fall into the bad ways of his predecessor, he committed to serving only two years of his term, after which he would hand on to someone else.

Very noble; but unfortunately, also very naive.

At our first meeting I told him bluntly that if he continued to govern on that basis: the system would not take his instructions seriously; his Cabinet would spend their time positioning for the succession, not working for the country; and he would not only be a lame duck but one that was effectively stationary.

Rather than the reputation of democracy being improved, it would be damaged because nothing would get done.

Fortunately, he decided to take my advice and, having been re-elected, is now beginning his second full term.

But even after two terms he will face a problem. If his successor is from a different party or dislikes his agenda, then the structural change he is attempting will lose momentum and stall.

Because the structural change will not be complete.

Such change takes time, and it takes a consistency of policy, and in a democracy, a degree of consistency through changes of government.

A good plan—well worked out with coherent policymaking underpinning it—not only gives the Leader the means of setting the agenda and governing effectively, it also gives the best chance of making the plan stick, because even though it will naturally be amended—bits will become redundant or irrelevant, not all of it will work as intended—the basic direction will be set with such force that it will take a better plan to derail it.

The plan should be drawn up with a rigorous attention to what is already in place. Whatever criticisms you have made of the previous administration—and let's assume there have been many, because that is in the nature of politics—judge impartially what is working and what is not. You don't have to reinvent everything. Just because "they" did it, doesn't mean it is wrong.

When I became prime minister in 1997, there were things from the period of my Conservative predecessors Margaret Thatcher and John Major I wanted to change; and things I felt were settled as a direction for the country and should remain.

So, we did not disturb the encouragement of private enterprise, much lower top rates of tax, privatisation of industries like telecoms that are better suited to market discipline, or the legal framework for industrial relations.

We also kept the core direction of foreign policy, at least around membership of the EU and a strong transatlantic alliance with the USA.

But we made big changes in the rebuilding of the public realm—health, education, law and order, welfare, children's services; we prioritised the poorest through tax credits and the minimum wage; and we changed radically the mood and policy around social and liberal issues such as gay rights.

So, there was a consistency of policy as well as significant change. That gave the business community particularly, at least up until the financial crisis and then Brexit, stability and predictability in policymaking.

But it arose as a result of, first, the Conservative government and then the New Labour government having a clear plan of what needed to be done, and why.

Of course, in one sense, any new government is a reaction to the last. But measure the consequences of that reaction assiduously.

Construct the plan with care; make it durable.

And design the strong centre which can deliver it.

CHAPTER TWO

Make the Centre Strong

Leaders often come to power with no executive experience. The skill set that makes for a good campaign to become Leader is not the same as the one required to be a good Leader, and indeed can be entirely inadequate once you're in office. You need to make a step change. The Great Persuader must, at a stroke, metamorphose into the Great CEO.

Campaigns are exhilarating things, carrying the aspirant along on a wave of hope and enthusiasm, and the risk is, if successful, the Leader believes in their own magic and treats governing as an extension of campaigning. This is a serious error.

Of course, when you're in power, communications, clear narrative and engagement with the people don't diminish in necessity. It is simply that the overriding challenge, once elected, is to govern and that means to deliver.

In opposition, it matters what you say. In government, it matters what you do. And saying is a lot easier than doing.

As was said earlier, governing is the one profession of importance in which a person with no qualifications, no track record, a CV devoid of content, can rise to a position of extraordinary power.

In any other walk of life, we would consider such a circumstance unthinkable, ridiculous even. A CEO who had never managed before; a maestro conducting the orchestra who had never held a baton; a pilot flying an aircraft with nothing more to guide them than a vague appreciation of aerodynamics—we laugh at the thought.

Imagine a Premiership football club, seeking a new coach, that said: hey, let's get the most enthusiastic fans together and do a hands up among

them for who should get the job. The fans themselves would think that mad. And the team wouldn't last long in the Premiership.

But in politics this can happen.

Now, of course, a political Leader has knowledge of politics and, in a previous life, may have run an organisation outside of politics. But that is different from governing a country. Many magnitudes of difference.

When I entered 10 Downing Street in May 1997, I had never held any ministerial office. I started at the top, which in one way is excellent. But it took me time to adjust, and time to learn that government requires a completely different mindset and application from opposition.

You may have your plan. The direction should be clear. But you need to make sure that the immediate world around you is organised to deliver.

And this starts at the very beginning, or, to misquote Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*, at your own office.

Don't listen to those who tell you to have a light touch, to let your ministers "get on with the job," to assume that others in the chain of command will do what they're meant to do. The people who proffer this advice are either academics trained in theory not practice, or civil servants who know that a weak centre allows them to rest easy.

This is not the same as devolution of power within a state, where decision-making itself is better exercised at a local level and where there is a process for deciding leadership—for example, city mayors or local officials in a federal system or, in a country such as the UK made up of different nations, devolved institutions. I mean control of those areas for which you as head of government are responsible.

All bureaucracies are the same. They're not conspiracies for one side or another in politics; they're conspiracies for maintaining the system and they have a corresponding genius for inertia. They can be utilised and driven but should not be left with the first or final say, as I shall explain later.

Occasionally, a Leader will come to power and the country is in good shape (despite whatever criticisms that Leader may have levelled at their

predecessor), and the task is good management, not change.

Fine. Then it is a little different. But I am addressing the Leader who wants to be a change-maker. And, in any case, rarely is the status quo satisfactory; otherwise, why would you be there?

The Leader needs a strong centre, a centre capable of initiating and carrying through change in an effective and timely manner.

The Leader has power precisely because they are the Leader. That is the position from which their authority is derived. Harness it wisely and things happen.

The strong centre is necessary because, without it, that authority is not able to be harnessed. It sits weakened or dormant. On the other hand, once the system knows that the centre is driving the agenda, it will respond: ministers will be put on notice, the purveyors of inertia become anxious and on the back foot.

But that strong centre won't happen of its own accord. Organising it is the Leader's first task.

It starts with something so obvious that many Leaders I come across miss it entirely: THE SCHEDULE!

When I was Leader of the Opposition in the UK and some time out from an election which we were expected to win, I visited President Clinton at the White House. As we began our set of meetings, he said: "Remind me to tell you something really important before you leave."

I was greatly taken with this and assumed I was about to have some huge secret of state imparted to me. As I was leaving, I reminded him. He looked at me very solemnly and said: "Whoever runs your schedule is the most important person in your world as Leader. You need time to think, time to study and time to get the things done you came to leadership to do. Lose control of the schedule and you will fail."

I confess I was a little underwhelmed at the time. But he was right.

Time is the most precious commodity. You can be absolutely sure that what appeared relatively straightforward when castigating the previous

leadership of the country becomes a world more complex when you are faced with real life painted not in slogans but in complex prose. And without time to focus on delivery, to work out the right policies, to manage the politics of the changes you're making, you will find that the grand vision you elaborated on so confidently when in opposition will never translate into reality.

Chinggis (or Genghis) Khan—who, after all, did create one of history's most extraordinary empires—once said: “Conquering the world on horseback was easy; the hard part was when you had to dismount and govern.”

And here is the challenge for the Leader. There are a million calls on your time. Foreign dignitaries stop by; necessary but ultimately—unless you're engaged in some mighty work which requires international engagement—a distraction.

Everyone wants something from you or wants to be with you. Fellow politicians, business folk, old and new friends. There are ceremonies to go to, funerals and weddings which can't be missed, occasions of state where the flummery is in inverse proportion to their impact on the lives of the citizens.

Many Leaders are in meetings from early morning to late night. Most of them unproductive. Every hour spent like this is an hour you cannot replace and diverts you from the real challenge of governing.

So, the person who runs the diary—that is, the schedule—and the people who have a say over what goes in it, have to be of the highest calibre and the closest connection to you. And they must operate under strict instructions.

You need to turn up to an event? Go, but spend no more than an hour there. Or less. The event organiser will complain, shout at your people, tell them that if you don't stay all night it will be deeply insulting and ruin your leadership. But your people must stand firm.

They should be smart enough, though, to judge. Sometimes you will have to stay all night. The point is: whoever is charged with the schedule

has to have real skill, small “p” political sensitivity, charm when saying no.

As a Leader it’s hard for you to say no; your inclination is always to say yes. That’s why, behind you, you need the guard dogs who will hold firm even under the most intense pressure.

Your ministers want time with you. You have to see them, of course. But not whenever they wish.

Parliament takes time. When I changed Prime Minister’s Questions from fifteen minutes twice a week in the afternoon to thirty minutes once a week at midday, I saved literally a day or a day and a half of prime ministerial time.

A Leader must keep in touch with their people. You go out into your country, seeing things first hand, meeting the locals, keeping up a constant patter of communications. All of this is important. But remember that a half-day trip is probably as efficient as a full day. Go in, meet, speak, leave.

You will have to see those foreign dignitaries. These relationships are important. But structure the visits. And minimise your own visits overseas. Again, they have to happen. But make the time spent effective, with as little protocol and as much proper substance as possible. Your people in charge of protocol are no doubt good people. They like their job. They like the fuss and fawning, the elaborate ceremony, the theatre of it all. But *you* shouldn’t like it because, if you do, you will spend a lot of time doing it.

Time not focused on delivering what you’re in government to do reduces your capacity to deliver.

I know Leaders who keep open house—and at first people love it: they bask in the Leader’s light; it shows that they, too, are important. But quite quickly, and in government things always move far quicker than in opposition, the open house pales, the people demand action, their expectations become mired in disillusion, and without the time and space to focus, the government loses its shine and the Leader their light.

Then there is something that all too easily gets neglected: you also need time for yourself, for your family, for relaxing, for shedding the stress, if only for a moment.

Your schedule has to create that personal time. Throughout the day people are sucking the energy from you, and you are giving orders, making decisions, all of it tiring and draining. That personal time replenishes the mind and the spirit.

I know it seems odd to prioritise the schedule in the almost religiously observant way I am proposing. And I accept there are some Leaders who seem never to rest or lose concentration; but if you're an ordinary mortal, following these simple rules will pay a huge dividend in efficacy.

Then, naturally, there is the rest of the centre to organise.

The aim should be to create a machine competent to propel the Leader's agenda. I deal with the detail of this later, but, in essence, given that you need the centre to be strong, it needs to be organised for strength.

I reorganised the centre of government after winning my second general election, having learnt the lessons of governing from my first mandate.

In the first term, I beat the system over the head to make it move faster. And to a degree it did. But not enough, and when I stopped beating it, it slowed back down.

The reorganisation's purpose was to focus the centre, give it the capacity and capability it needed to drive the government, and hold it accountable—to me, but also to hold me accountable to my own intentions. And to be always on. Even when I was distracted.

My restructuring involved separate units dedicated to *policy*, *strategy*, *communications* and *delivery*.

The Delivery Unit concept is what that reorganisation is best known for and it is now widely replicated globally. Michael Barber was its midwife, did a brilliant job and wrote a book about it—*Deliverology*—which, I kid you not, sits on the bookshelves of many Leaders I know.

But the other innovations were equally important.

In the Policy Unit policy specialists can track the development of government policy and also suggest improvement or adjustment. It's

important to note that these specialists should come not from government departments but from the Leader's own team, and should embody great analysis and policy capacity.

The Strategy Unit focuses on longer-term thinking which throws up new ideas and ways of looking at the world.

A Strategic Communications Unit is vital, of course, because otherwise a government seems technocratic rather than value- and mission-driven. It needs to provide communications of the strategic sort; i.e., not just for the next day's news but for consistency of explanation across government.

So, the centre of government must be strong enough to help devise policy, ensure strategic coherence, keep the plan on course, communicate it and, above all, deliver on it.

There will be crises, things which were never anticipated, events of a supervening nature, scandals, shocks and alarums and excursions, but throughout the Leader must have a machine relentlessly focused on achieving the objectives set.

Make the centre **STRONG!**

CHAPTER THREE

Prioritisation: Try to Do Everything and You Will Likely Do Nothing

I often say to new Leaders that a good way to approach governing is through what I call the four P's: prioritisation, policy, personnel and performance management.

The first—prioritisation—is much harder than it seems.

You come into government with a manifesto. It is usually detailed. It has to touch all the electoral bases. It is supposed to be a plan for government. But the reality is it isn't. That's not its purpose. Its purpose is to be part of a (winning) campaign. Even if drafted with care and discipline, it is a list of the desirable, not necessarily the doable, and it is written with the uplifting rhetoric of hope rather than the more dour honesty which a true plan for government entails.

There's a joke I was once told by a Catholic priest about religion which could be applied to politics as well. A group of the deceased arrive at the pearly gates to be met not as they anticipated by St. Peter but by the Devil, who says to them: "Look, before you meet St. Peter, let me first show you the choices, because I get an undeserved bad reputation and it's important you know them." They say OK and he shows them heaven, where the people are peacefully relaxing, talking in quiet undertones respectfully, reading the odd improving book and generally behaving. Then he shows them hell: there are wild parties, drinking and debauchery, everyone indulging with abandon and abundance.

Wow, they think, we never knew hell was like that. They go back up to the pearly gates and say to St. Peter: “It’s really nice of you to offer us heaven but, um, no offence, we really would prefer to go to hell.” So, off they go. They enter hell and there is wailing, gnashing of teeth, it’s cold, miserable and horrible. They see the Devil standing there surveying it all and angrily accost him, saying: “Hey, what’s happening? Where are the parties and drinking and debauchery, the living it up, and all those great things you promised?”

“Ah, well,” says the Devil, “back then I was campaigning.”

The campaign and its manifesto are the guide to winning, but they’re an unsuitable guide to governing, except in describing what you hope will happen, and they rarely prioritise with the rigour that, once you assume power, is absolutely vital.

As I said, if you try to do everything, you will likely end up doing nothing.

When I first entered Downing Street as a new prime minister, I was met by the Cabinet Secretary, at that time a grand and significant figure in the UK system for sure, who told me proudly that the Civil Service had been reading the manifesto and drawing up plans for implementation. He meant well, naturally. After eighteen years of Conservative government, he wanted to show that the system accepted the legitimacy of the new masters.

But I confess I was somewhat alarmed at the notion that what they might think were the priorities would not coincide with what I thought were the priorities; and I had to explain that the manifesto was a document of intention, not a defined plan for government.

Government operates by bandwidth. One of the challenges arising out of Britain’s decision to leave the European Union—and let us tactfully, for these purposes, leave aside the rights and wrongs of the decision—was that it took up a huge amount of the bandwidth of governing. It extracted an immense part of the political energy from the system, shortening the concentration span available for other things.

There is no shame in being frank about this. No minister—including and perhaps especially the prime minister—and therefore no government can focus on all problems in the same way. There isn't the time and there isn't the mental capacity.

So, a government in its ministries will get on with a range of different things and try to cover the entire landscape and that's as it should be. Some things matter more than others, though, either because they are important objectively or because, subjectively, they're priorities for the government or the minister. You need a process for determining what they truly are and be clear there can't be too many of them.

Now, of course, in one sense everything is a priority. When I made my first party conference speech as Leader I expressed the first three priorities of an incoming government as: "education, education and education." Great line. Made the necessary impact. But I remember next day meeting someone who said to me: "So healthcare doesn't matter any more?"

You can't as a Leader ever say that something isn't a priority. You're addressing the arts community and are asked: "Is culture a priority?" Or you're making a speech to the development community and you're posed the same question about aid as a priority. What are you going to say? "Nah, not really"?

Which, for the avoidance of doubt, is not to say that either is unimportant. Both are very important. But they won't determine whether you're in government or not.

But there are things which define the government and you as Leader.

A good way to identify them is to imagine you're making a speech for your re-election. What is it ideally that you would want to be able to say you have achieved? You're never going to convince people you have done everything; but what is it that defines you as having at least done something?!

Work back from that and you will have the answer to your priorities. You might not really have understood them until you work out what it is you want to say you have done.

Of course, “something” must have been done, and to have been done, it had to have been doable.

And doable means not only worthy of being done but practically achievable.

I once advised a Leader who was discussing with me his top priority, which was a massive infrastructure project. There was no doubt that it would have been transformative. It was a big, bold and beautiful idea. “It’s a game-changer,” he said to me confidently. “But what makes you think it can be done and financed?” I asked. To which he had no convincing answer. I advised him to check out its feasibility before he made a political commitment that pinned his fortunes to a mast whose robustness he had not adequately investigated.

You can have a goal and fail. But you should at least know it has a serviceable chance of success before spending energy and political capital on it.

The priorities are the big things, and because they’re big, there can’t be fifteen of them. If you’re lucky you will make five. And the process of prioritisation must begin at the beginning of the government. Otherwise, effort is diffused, or events drive the agenda.

The system—by which I mean the government departments, the Civil Service and the associated public sector agencies—needs direction at the outset. That does not guarantee the system will agree on each priority’s importance, but it will know for sure what you consider important.

This is crucial because each minister and each ministry will have their own pet projects or their own ideas as to what really matters.

You are the CEO of the organisation. You have a certain amount of political capital. Any good change usually requires the expenditure of some of that capital. If you don’t carefully spell out the priorities, you will find the capital is being spent on things your senior team may care deeply about, but that you don’t believe are worth your capital they’re depleting.

This process of prioritisation, therefore, is not just about the obvious fact you can’t do everything, it is also a political framework which shapes

your government.

So, don't take this process casually, or let it come about of its own accord. Focus on it, treat it as an essential part of the road map, not only for the first term but an essential component of the route-finder for getting another.

Once you have your set of priorities fixed, you need the policies to implement them.

CHAPTER FOUR

Good Policy Is (Nearly) Always Good Politics

I used to say to my children: “Work hard, play hard = possibility of success; play hard, work hard = virtual certainty of failure.” The order is important. There are always those who defy the odds. But I can say that, almost without exception, anyone at the top of any profession, from business to sport, that I have met followed the “work hard, play hard” order. (Or only worked hard, of course!) In the music business, I did know folk who succeeded while apparently focusing on playing extremely hard. But in the end, they either corrected themselves or their career declined.

The same rule applies to politicians. For government the equivalent reads: policy first, politics second. In other words, decide the right policy to solve the problem and then fashion the right politics around it; don’t decide the politics and then form a policy to suit.

In general terms, and contrary to much received political wisdom, the best politics usually derives from the best policy. This is not universally true and may at any given moment seem apparently untrue. But on the whole, good policy has a good outcome, bad policy a bad one; and the Leader has to believe that, over time, people notice.

A myriad of things gets in the way of good policy. Short-term politics frequently militates against it. Interests vested in the status quo fear and fight it. Distractions put the government off course. And occasionally a changing reality renders a once good policy bad.

However, just as the public like a government with a plan, because they feel it knows what it wants and therefore to a degree what it is doing, and so gives them confidence, they will listen to a government which sets out a policy with belief. They will listen most closely if that conviction seems clearly derived from sound analysis.

During the Covid-19 crisis in the UK, for example, there was some understandable anxiety about the programme of mass vaccination, with vaccines being developed at unprecedented speed, and with the normal timelines for research and trials suspended. There was resentment at restrictions on our daily lives, at having to wear masks, take innumerable tests and all the wretched panoply of Covid measures we had never experienced before.

In retrospect, no doubt mistakes were made and aspects of policy, or the application of policy, wrong.

And there are those who still today rail against the whole business and think those of us who advocated it are quasi-fascist.

But they're a minority. Most people accepted vaccination was necessary (and FYI the roll-out of the vaccine in the UK decisively cut serious illnesses and deaths).

And most accepted there had to be at least some restrictions.

This was because the policy appeared to be rooted in a genuine and sensible policymaking process. The emergency meant that though everything was happening at speed, it also had huge focus from government, constant running explanation and experts in support.

And so, again in the end, the politicians who took the evidence-based approach, who stood out against populist ranting about vaccines and restrictions, managed to come through relatively politically unscathed. I can't think of a single Leader in a Western democracy who lost power by having a strong commitment to a worked-out Covid policy.

The policy was well developed partly because of the enormous effort and time devoted to it in government. For two years, it was the only

priority. The country was battling something extraordinarily serious and affecting everyone directly in one way or another.

So, this is a great example of policymaking but also in unique circumstances.

Much harder is to take that framework of policymaking and transfer it across wide swathes of policy applied to normal times.

And to avoid it being driven by what is politically convenient rather than what is intellectually correct. Policy born of ideology or convenience distorts analysis, preconceives in bias that which should be conceived through evidence, and reinforces rigidity in a world constantly changing and therefore requiring openness to new thinking.

I often used to say in Cabinet, or in discussion with close advisers, first let's try to work out the right answer. We can get to the politics later. But what is the right analysis of the problem we're trying to solve? What are the facts? What might be a solution which really works?

And don't think about the issue as a politician. If we're debating education, think about it as a parent. If the topic is healthcare, think about it like a patient. If crime, like a victim.

The best policy starts with those questions from that perspective and then the politics is layered on top once the answer is decided.

At one level politics is a crude retail business: winning votes, devising slogans, kissing babies and having the physical stamina to survive a brutal campaign. But at another level—the dimension called government—it is an intensely intellectual exercise. It requires real brainpower. And study.

Politicians become adept over time at speaking about things they haven't a clue about. And, if they're good at it, they can do it with panache and—to the uninformed ear—credibility.

In the real world of government that doesn't cut it. You should know what you're talking about because you have taken the time and effort to master it.

Governments should also work with people who are actually doing what a government is proposing to affect by laws or administrative decision. I always found that interaction with the people in the front line of public services gave insights that no amount of briefing papers could uncover. Deep consultation with the business community would save a lot of errors if it was conducted in a spirit not of suspicion but partnership.

Ensure that policymaking is a collaborative effort, not in the sense that you opt for consensus and the lowest common denominator, but in the sense of reaching out to those who may have an interest and also the imagination to think beyond it, or to those who are actively seeking change in the area they work in and know about.

Treat policymaking not as a spasmodic response to the difficulty of the day but as an opportunity to go deep and make change which lasts: a change not a splash.

And though the Leader should not get lost in detail, they must know enough, and therefore understand enough, to be satisfied that the policy meets the objective.

In this exercise, be careful not to arrive at an approach by halves. By this I mean sometimes you have worked out with your team what the right answer is, but then have to take account of political realities that may be so strong they threaten to overpower the policy. But gauge the strength with caution. If you have to compromise, OK. But within the margin between “have to” and “choose to” lies a critical test of leadership. Every step away from where on the right analysis you need to be is a defeat of sorts. So don’t willingly surrender to it out of a desire for an easier life. Do so only if forced by necessity.

Take immigration, an issue bedevilling the politics of every Western country. Our economies depend on it. But it also imposes a cultural strain. My view has always been that provided there are rules, we will avoid prejudices. It is an issue of order. Most people can accept that a certain level and type of immigration is economically essential, but they worry when they think the whole system is broken.

This is sometimes seen as a numbers game and it can be so, if the numbers immigrating are very large. But, primarily, it's about control, about ensuring the means to decide who has a right to come to your country, rather than allowing immigration to be the consequence of the immigrant's own determination to come because the system itself is failing. And effective enforcement is critical.

The reality, therefore, is that if you want consent for the immigration the economy needs, then you must reflect in your policy what society demands. Hence the argument for digital ID: if you have that in place, with the necessary safeguards, the government knows exactly who has a right to be in the country and who doesn't.

I appreciate all the arguments about privacy and the fears expressed about government having people's data. But the world is moving towards digital ID, in any event, as a means of helping the citizen interact with government more directly and effectively; and it is a short step from there to using it as a control mechanism for migration. The alternative is a sense there are no controls which then feeds anti-immigrant sentiment in a way that is both economically and socially detrimental.

In other words, the right answer has to take account of political reality; it just shouldn't be abandoned because of it.

Recognise what you can learn from others. Comb the world for the best ideas. Leaders often think their country's problems are unique. This leads to the invariably incorrect assessment that the solutions likewise will be unique.

A Leader can learn so much from other countries' expertise. All over the globe countries are grappling with similar challenges: how to reform or—in much of the developing world—how to initiate systems of education and healthcare; how to digitise government and the economy. Among poorer nations, where agriculture remains the main source of employment, there are many with large areas of highly fertile land who nevertheless struggle to produce enough and get that produce to market, and who therefore find themselves forced regularly to import basic foodstuffs.

Every country I know is working out how to modernise their infrastructure and how to make the most of public–private partnerships. You can pretty much guarantee that someone somewhere is trying to do what you’re trying to do. Some are succeeding. Copy them; or at least learn from their experience.

Bring in the best brains from wherever in the world they may be. Policy nationalism—“we know best how to solve our problems and don’t need outsiders telling us what to do”—is crass. It simply means that the country is governed by the constraints of its systems and home-grown talent rather than enlarging capability beyond them.

Singapore affords a good lesson here—as in so many things. Under its first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore unashamedly imported the business and human capital it needed to flourish. Today it exports both. But without the first, it could never have done the second. A more unusual example would be the flourishing Korean arts community. First came decades of study of Western film and music. And there then followed this extraordinary Korean version of both which has taken the arts world by storm.

Finally, policymaking has a more immediate and then a longer-term dimension to it. Especially in a world brimming with new thinking, it is hard to keep up with the evolution of ideas around policy. In Downing Street, we therefore had a Strategy Unit operating alongside the Policy Unit. The purpose of the former was to ensure the latter was working in alignment with the trend of intellectual thought.

The Strategy Unit contained a cadre of top-quality people, usually from outside the system and usually on secondment as a break from their conventional careers. Their task was to map out where the future might go, so that present and future policy had a relationship to each other. Today, more than ever, this function within government is vital.

Various international examples illustrate the point.

Singapore determined some years back to become the pharma hub of Asia (just as the UK could lead the world in life science if it used the NHS

data it possesses as a platform).

The manufacturing giants of South Korea (a country which in the 1960s had the same GDP per head as Sierra Leone) or Taiwan didn't arrive by accident but by careful partnership between government and private sector.

Silicon Valley itself originated from research and science to improve the US military and defence capability. And think of the contribution Bell Labs made to the American economy and to technology.

The United Arab Emirates is one of the foremost countries today in the field of artificial intelligence. It started on that journey a decade ago. But it thought ahead strategically.

None of these groundbreaking initiatives would have happened without government having the capacity and the leadership to think ahead.

But the quality of the thinking is only as good as the quality of the thinkers.

CHAPTER FIVE

It's All About the People

There are some things so obvious in life that to state them seems otiose; and yet, though obvious, you can point to countless examples in your own career—I certainly can—of where the obvious has been ignored.

Foremost among these is the basic truth: it's all about the people. By this I mean not “the people” but the personnel the Leader chooses to surround themselves with.

In any field of endeavour, in whatever situation requiring leadership, this is essential. In politics it is mission critical. Wherever my institute works in the world, and I sit with and observe Leaders, I can tell which ones have teams that function well and which ones don't. And I can almost guarantee that those Leaders with poorly functioning teams will fail.

One of the most important first challenges of leadership, therefore, is to pick the team under you. These are the people who will execute your design, interface with stakeholders, guide you, sustain you in the tough times, be your eyes, ears and, at points, brain.

There don't need to be that many of them. I used to say: give me three or four smart people and we can transform a department. I was lucky in Downing Street that I had a truly outstanding group of people helping me.

Those in the immediate circle of the Leader need to be clever—clearly; hard-working—of course; but they also need to possess other qualities, especially in politics. They need to be tough and, in situations of stress, able to cope, confident enough to fight back, willing to bend but only when necessity demands.

They should be unafraid to tell you the truth or to disagree. In many systems, because of the culture of a country, the Leader's team will be deferential to the point of sycophancy. But Leaders need to be challenged. Internal debate is healthy not disruptive. And there should be the trust between the Leader and their team that allows such debate. Once a decision is made, then, obviously, everyone needs to get behind it. But the quality of the decision will be greatly affected by the quality of the debate which preceded it. Respect for the Leader is crucial. Adulation is misguided.

At the same time, the team needs to be sensitive to the enormous pressure leadership puts upon political Leaders. Even today, having been a prime minister for ten years, I sometimes forget how easy it is to criticise and how hard it is to do. Leaders need their confidence boosting, even as they're being told uncomfortable truths. The team, in celebrating good news, should never keep the bad hidden. But, in the peculiar circumstances of politics, there is a fine line between frankness and destroying self-belief, and the team has to be able to tread that line with subtlety.

The team should be loyal to the Leader. They must also be loyal to each other. Throwing colleagues under the bus when the going gets rough is one of the least admirable characteristics I know. Yet it's common.

Really good people are hard to come by. In any walk of life exceptional talent is, well, exceptional. So, if you see someone with such talent, then go after them; if they're as good as you think they are, you will never regret it.

And never be afraid of having around you people smarter than you are. Avoiding doing so is a chronic leadership failing. Doing so will ultimately only make you look better!

That said, no one is irreplaceable. People, no matter how good, can burn out in a profession as raw and brutal as politics. I made the mistake several times of wanting to keep people who knew their time was up when I didn't. Your team should be a support not a prop. Habit can't stand in the way of efficiency.

If you're the Leader of a country, one big advantage you possess is that you have huge pulling power. You ask someone to come and work with you

and, most times, the answer is yes. It may take some persuasion, some pursuit of the target, but in the end most people are patriotic and if their president or prime minister needs them, they will respond affirmatively to the call. That's why searching for the right people is rarely wasted time. The pursuit is worth it.

Crucial is a policy team that is smart, capable, without its own agenda and obedient to yours.

It will nearly always involve the input of outside experts. Political Leaders should not be captivated by experts, but should be respectful of them. They should not decide policy, but they should at least inform it.

However, I notice two features of today's world relevant to policy: the world is moving so fast that a Leader struggles to keep up with the new; and because of the complexity associated with systemic change, you need specialists to guide you.

As our knowledge expands, particularly in science and technology, so the generalist is giving way to the specialist. In fact, you can see this trend replicated in virtually every walk of life—in specific fields of medicine, in the law, from the provision of services to engineering.

This poses an additional problem for most civil services today. The civil servant, no matter how bright, has no realistic chance whatever of competing in knowledge and expertise with someone who is devoting their lives to a study or practice of a specialist subject.

So it's sensible for governments in this environment to pull in people from the outside, to open up to temporary secondments from other domains, private or public, and enlarge the space for innovative or at least intelligent and well-informed policymaking. Unfortunately, misguided anxieties about conflicts of interest, and unease at allowing strangers into the inner sanctum, often deter such openness. Such feelings should be resisted.

The "team," however, also includes ministers, and this is a whole different bouillabaisse.

I always divide ministers into two categories: those you want to choose and those you are obliged to choose. The former are the people you pick

with enthusiasm; the latter are picked for you by politics. Every Leader will know that there are those you have to keep on your side for various political reasons—balance of factions, debts of honour or loyalty, skills which may not be entirely suited to managing a department, but which nonetheless are very useful in managing the government.

The important thing here is to put the people you want because of their ability in the most important jobs, and those appointed out of political necessity in positions where they have status but little practical impact. In other words, the roles which determine whether the government will deliver or not must be given to the people who can help carry the burden towards political success.

Let's say education is a top priority and you know it requires major reform. Put the wrong minister in charge and you will never get the programme delivered in the way you want. The reforms either won't happen or will happen ineffectively. The focus won't be there and, in the absence of strong political direction, the system will take over and the energy to reform will be absorbed and dissipated. The job has to go to the minister with the talent to see things through.

Not only should you make sure that the best ministers are in the key roles, you should also be unafraid to promote those who exhibit particular talent. That may seem an odd thing to say. Surely you reward talent with greater responsibility and influence? In politics, however, it is often the case that Leaders feel threatened by talented ministers, and fear that promoting them will create potential challengers for the top job.

This is a mistake. Failure to promote talent plainly and adversely affects the efficiency of the government. Less plain is that it is also pointless. True talent will find its own way. There's a risk, too, that the resentment caused by keeping the talent down, for fear of a challenge, will increase the likelihood of a challenge being mounted.

No Leader can make the changes a country's future demands by themselves. They need a team. That team must be the best on offer. Second-rate teams make for second-rate achievement and insubstantial change.

Part of the job of the team is to work with the bureaucracy. And in optimal circumstances, some of the high-performing bureaucrats will become an integral part of the team.

CHAPTER SIX

Curb Your Bureaucracy but Cultivate It

All Leaders have to deal with their bureaucracy. The dreaded “system”! Every country has one. It comes in varying degrees of size, competence and effectiveness. At some point, and for some Leaders quite soon after starting, that system will become frustrating/confusing/enraging.

It is thus very important to know what bureaucracies are and what they aren't; what is reasonable to expect of them and what isn't.

Nearly all of them have some common characteristics. They regard themselves as permanent and the Leader as temporary. OK, if you're a long-standing dictator it may be different—though the system can still think an act of man or God can change that.

They know from experience that risk is rarely rewarded, and caution even more rarely punished. So, their default setting is to advise against action of a transformative nature, and to create a mood of hesitation in the mind of the Leader.

The civil servants are usually generalists. They have broad experience which can be immensely useful; but they lack specialist knowledge. This can be hugely limiting and means it is unwise to trust them with issues that require expertise.

Above all, they deal in process. Process is their game. Before anyone is sniffy about process, it does matter. It is a worthy means to an end. The trouble is its tendency to become the end, to take on a life of its own, thereby extinguishing creativity and innovation and embroiling the desired objective of policy in a continuous loop of deliberation not decision.

Therefore, the Leader has to curb the bureaucracy's natural inclination to be, well, bureaucratic—hence the importance of obtaining outside advice, for leadership grip, for ensuring the “system” is directed and not merely engaged.

Concentrate, too, on making the process genius of the bureaucracy as efficient as possible. Precisely because it matters.

I know of governments whose Cabinet meetings are endless. I can think of long, impenetrable briefings that consume whole forests of paper, where if there is a decision to be made it is lost somewhere in the middle of it all, unseeable by the normal eye. I have seen ministers—already daunted by their own subject area—expected to master a host of others with no guidance and little appetite. Just a vast mass of quite unstructured facts and analyses that sits on the decision-making like a huge meal you feel will never be digested.

So it is worth paying attention to the processes right at the start of getting the reins of power in your hands. Don't assume anything about the system. Not what it can do or what it can't. Treat it like a job applicant. Assess its capabilities and its friendliness or willingness.

The top civil servant is a very important appointment. And yet it's surprising how many new Leaders take over government and simply accept without question or investigation who is leading the machine supposedly under their command.

Realise there is no great mystique about the bureaucracy. It is part of the public sector much like any other part. That is to say its cadres are a mix of the genuinely public-spirited, the very able, the less able and the jobsworth. Its benefit is that it is a public service. Its disbenefit is that it is not subject to the skill-honing, talent-seeking discipline of the market. Or not to the same degree.

You should curb its bureaucratic impulse; but you can cultivate its public-spirited one. The issues a bureaucracy deals with are not lacking in importance. They affect real people's lives. And there are, within any

system, those who recognise this, have a sense of duty about it and will work hard to fulfil that duty.

Naturally, too, there is also ambition. For those with ambition it is vital that they understand from the Leader what is likely to crown that ambition with promotion. Put the emphasis on results, on delivery, on getting things done, and those with ambition will respond. Reward improvements in process that aid improvements in substance and, very soon, the message will percolate down.

Energise it with clarity of direction and purpose and the system will adjust and reorient—and will do so quite happily.

Chaos, absence of grip, these are the things which awaken bureaucracy's inner inertia. Rather like some animals when they sense danger, the bureaucracy goes into self-protect mode, gathering in its exposed parts and lying still, waiting for the environment around it to settle and be commanded.

Government departments are notorious for becoming silos, i.e., self-contained places where only one idea is stored, places which encase that idea from being infected by others. The problem is that life doesn't fit with siloed ideas. Most government challenges require different departments to work in cooperation with each other and with the outside world. The Leader needs to create the spaces for such cooperation where the silos are opened.

One of the reasons why the centre of government has to be strong around the Leader is so that there is an overview of the programme that makes sure the parts fit together, that one part of government is not operating in contradiction, defiance or ignorance of another which could have a bearing on the programme's objectives.

Can the bureaucracy be trained or reskilled? Most Leaders with experience of governing are sceptical. But the true answer is: to an extent. And as with everything else, the pervasive impact of technology means that some training and reskilling is essential.

I can't think of a Leader who has come to the end of their leadership without quite strong opinions of their "system." Those opinions vary. But

what they have in common is a feeling that even after a longish spell in government, the one never fully understands the other. For the Leader the system is rather like a picture you like but are never quite sure where to hang it in the house.

I guess this is because the Leader feels, at first, that, to switch simile, the bureaucracy is like an instrument in their hands. It may be ungainly and unwieldy or it may be sleek and smart. But it's possible to learn how to use it.

However, in time, the Leader appreciates that it isn't an instrument; it is a living organism. It has a mind and a temperament. So, while it can still be used and craves use by a good Leader, it can't be owned or bent completely to the Leader's will.

Bureaucracy is good for some things; bad for others. It will try to carry out orders but not past its own estimation of its capacity. If it obstructs, it can do so with a guile fatal to a Leader's programme. If it assists, it can be an effective helper, but it will never be a substitute for the Leader and their team.

So, as I say, worth paying attention to!

PART II

Delivery

CHAPTER SEVEN

Democracy or Not, It's All About Delivery

Whether a Leader is operating in a Western-style democracy, a “managed” form of democracy, a benevolent autocracy or is a “strongman” Leader, it is always about delivery.

I believe democracy is the best and highest form of government. But I also believe that it has become used to assuming its superiority; and we now live in an era where it must prove it.

A couple of decades ago when I would visit a country that was not a democracy, the Leader would half apologetically explain that his country was not yet ready for a democratic experiment, but in time, it was implied, it would get there. There was an acceptance that democracy is what a country should aspire to.

Now it is different. Those Leaders of non-democratic countries who are reasonable and open-minded people don't despise democracy as a dictator might; but they question it, question its stability, its media environment and, above all, its ability to take decisions and implement them. In other words, on the central challenge of governance—“getting things done”—they are unconvinced.

I point out that of the countries with the highest living standards today, the overwhelming majority are democracies, that the world's most powerful country—the USA—is a democracy and that, by and large, more people want to move to such countries than leave them—always a good sign.

It is a powerful argument historically. And it remains clearly powerful when we see how the freedom inherent in democracies allows innovation to flourish and private enterprise to feel unthreatened by state corruption or confiscation. The rule of law, as we shall see, is a huge advantage which most democracies have and by and large non-democracies lack.

But when it comes to governance, the riposte I hear too often is: you—meaning Leaders of democratic nations—have lost the capacity for long-term thinking or planning, your policymaking takes second place to your politicking, and your media environment means you’re constantly managing crises which are of marginal importance to the future of your nations, while at the same time not focusing on the big things which will determine it.

In other words, an argument that we might have thought of as conclusive no longer seems so. Moreover, scepticism about democracy is no longer confined to more authoritarian regimes: it’s also expressed by many citizens of democratic countries.

Now, for other elements of Western society, particularly parts of our media, the reason for democracy’s failings is clear. For them, it’s all about “transparency” or “accountability.” Are governments “honest”? Are politicians “trustworthy”? For parts of the international development and aid community, it’s all about human rights.

These are somewhat different ways of saying that democracy is morally challenged and that its cure lies in “exposing” enough wrongdoing, having Leaders who “tell the truth,” and putting it all out in the open, so to speak. If we do that, the argument goes, we will get great Leaders who will, in close alliance with “the people,” make our lives better.

For the avoidance of doubt, I am not saying these moral questions aren’t important or are immaterial to governing—at a certain level of development, they’re crucial. But not at any stage of development should they outweigh delivery.

The challenge of democracy today is efficacy. Even if a democracy has a wonderful record on transparency, it won’t trump a lousy record on

delivery.

And in a developing nation, where people struggle to put food on the table, go to school, get rudimentary healthcare, eke out an existence not a career, delivery can be the difference between life and death; or at least the difference between a life with hope and one without it.

Of course, people want “honest” politicians, Leaders they trust; but above all what they want are solutions. They want the problems impacting their lives solved or at least mitigated. They want a higher standard of living, a better quality of life, improved healthcare and education, security.

These can’t be simply the product of good intentions honestly expressed; they come from the implementation of policies which work.

Let us dig deeper. Take a classic Western democracy. The reality in too many countries is that—contrary to the rule I set out earlier—politics comes first and policy second. The short term eclipses the long term. The political class seems often happier discussing a scandal than a solution.

Social media, in addition, creates a toxic environment for debate and a climate of genuine hatred and therefore risk for elected representatives.

Instability is as pronounced a feature of Western democracy today as stability. Traditional parties are being blown up by varieties of populists; splinter parties come and go. The politics of grievance predominates among significant parts of the electorate. All over Europe parties which used to hold power for long periods of time are crumbling. In the USA both traditional parties are uneasy coalitions of discord. In just eight years, between 2016 and 2024, the UK had six prime ministers. When I left office, I was the third in almost thirty. No wonder the country has a problem. How could it not?

The root cause of the instability is a failure to deliver. Since the financial crisis, living standards for many have stalled. Anxiety over immigration rages but no one seems to be able to solve it. Public spending is high; taxes commensurately high; outcomes in public services are low. Welfare spending doesn’t appear to be effective in meeting societal pressures. Crime, especially organised crime, and disrespect for national

institutions, of pride for the majority, seem to go unchecked. Conventional politicians proclaim they have solutions, but experience has taught people to doubt such protestations.

This is why populism is on the march. It really isn't complicated. If conventional democratic politics doesn't seem to work, the person promising the biggest shake-up, creating the most stir, provoking the most outrage among the conventional, succeeds.

Everything in this book is designed to explain why delivery, making the change which works, is the only real test of government. But it is also the only way to protect democracy.

In the developing world, the context is different. But the lesson is the same. Here honesty and transparency can more vitally affect systems which impact efficacy. Corruption is the bane of delivery. Not only because it is morally wrong, but because it is a bad guide to decision-making. It spoils the opportunity for improvement in institutions and creates precisely the wrong spirit for enterprise and innovation to flourish.

But outside of this issue, any country today can make progress if it follows the principles of good governance. And by this, I mean not just "honest" governance but, above all, effective governance—in other words, they put systems and policies in place which can deliver. What is the best way of entrenching democracy in a country with only a nascent tradition of democratic government? Show it works!

If Western governments put as much effort into development policies that helped developing countries deliver practical solutions as they do in giving lectures on constitutional propriety, they and those they genuinely seek to help would be better off.

OK. Having made the case for efficacy as the most important ambition for government, and pointing out why Western democracy often has failings which managed democracy and benevolent autocracy often don't, let me state the corrective.

"Managed" democracy and "benevolent" autocracy only work if the managers remain smart and the autocrats remain benevolent. They fail if,

for whatever reason, they morph into the “strongman” category.

As with everything else, there are no doubt exceptions, but “strongman” government, most times, doesn’t work.

Such governments have one very big drawback, which isn’t only to do with the principle of the thing, but goes to the heart of efficacy and delivery. Where there are no checks and balances on the exercise of power, because everyone is too terrified to disagree, bad decisions result.

Two recent examples stand out from countries which have led the charge against liberal democracy: Russia and China.

If Russia were a proper functioning democracy, the president of the country would never have made the extraordinary miscalculation that Ukraine—for all its flaws a true democracy with an elected president—would lie down and—given the history between the countries—let its neighbour walk all over it. No two genuine democracies have ever gone to war and for good reason. Their people prefer to live in peace and sort out disputes without military conflict. Whatever the outcome, the devastating consequences of this miscalculation for Russia—as well as, obviously, Ukraine—will last a generation. It came about because the Russian leader created an infrastructure around him denuded of the capacity to challenge.

China received praise for its initial handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Its death rates were vastly lower than those in Western countries. It pursued a policy of zero Covid-19 and for a time that policy seemed to have worked. In the USA and Europe, by contrast, partly by political choice and partly because of popular hostility shown towards lockdowns, the disease was initially left to run through the population, before lockdowns stabilised the situation and the virus was then brought under control through the building up of significant levels of natural immunity and by mass vaccination.

The advent of the Omicron variant, which was massively more contagious, changed the game and should have changed the policy of China. But because the leadership had pinned its colours to the mast of zero Covid, it couldn’t or wouldn’t adjust. The very omnipotence of the leadership created rigidity, not flexibility. The result was a policy that

caused immense damage and hardship without good reason—never a sensible stance for a Leader to adopt, even one without democratic accountability.

The answer is not necessarily democracy. But it is, at least, a system efficacious enough to permit challenge. Even if you're the Leader of a country without a democratic tradition, surrounding yourself with good people willing to debate with you, and you being smart enough to realise the importance of being open to challenge, is an essential part of delivery. Without this, you may have the power to deliver, but you won't have the policy which, in fact, delivers.

China is very different from Russia in history, tradition, civilisation and in its bureaucracy. It may well possess within its system the capability to adjust and move from the present attempts to recreate a leadership of almost Maoist consolidation of power. And if it does, the reason will be precisely that such a consolidation, buttressed by ideological dispositions, will fail the delivery test.

Putin has had a major influence on the politics of the twenty-first century. There is indeed a sort of "Putin model" of governance. I remember when he started to crush nascent Russian democracy, turning elected positions into appointed ones, stripping out the sinews of a free media, casting political opponents as enemies of the nation, and being prepared even to eliminate some *pour encourager les autres*.

To begin with, people barely noticed, it seemed so discordant with the theory of the triumph of liberal democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union. When they did notice what was happening, Putin was viewed as an outlier, an exception, an example unlikely, so we thought, to be followed.

But many would-be Leaders were studying his trajectory, calculating whether it was indeed possible to concentrate absolute power in this way, crush dissent, and open up the prospect of a political longevity unthinkable in a genuine democracy.

They saw that it wasn't simply about the concentration of authority; it was also about developing a narrative as to why this was necessary in the

interests of the country. And in a world changing fast, with economic and increasingly cultural insecurity, such a dominant authority figure seemed less frightening than the economic stasis and cultural relativism of traditional democratic Leaders.

The “strongman Leader” concept underwent a renaissance; and Putin was its exemplar.

In significant ways, there was alignment between the worries of the Western electorates and those supporting the emerging strongman Leaders in non- or quasi-democratic countries.

Both could see the world around them being changed in ways they didn’t like and didn’t feel they had consented to, both saw the authority figure as therefore their protection against this change, and neither believed that those opposing such figures had a viable plan for economic progress.

But above all, both believed that with the strongman, at least “something” would be done. The paralysis gripping democratic systems as they struggled with competing demands would be broken down by someone powerful enough, and indifferent enough to opposition, to do it.

This is why there is such ambivalence about Putin among both the far left and far right in democratic countries. His “admirers” are real.

There is much agonising as to how to arrest this anti-democratic trend.

What won’t work are expressions of outrage which become ever more shrill, as it appears the outrage is not properly shared by other parts of the population.

What will work is comprehension as to the nature of the problem and the politics necessary to resolve it.

If you as a Leader don’t recognise the people’s anxieties and deal with them effectively, they will enable someone who does recognise them to take power, even if it means sacrificing traditional mechanisms of accountability. To take just one example: if you as a Leader don’t comprehend the genuine concerns about rising immigration, the populist will quickly exploit your incomprehension.

In virtually every case, the populism is a response to the failure of conventional—what we might call “centrist”—politics to take strong positions which push back hard against the “deaf ear” tendency of elements of progressive politics.

There is no doubt in my mind that this represents a significant part of the appeal, enduring against all the odds, of Donald Trump in American politics.

When countries appear helpless on immigration, or weak in the face of extreme positions on culture war issues, we give sustenance to the populist.

This is another dimension of a failure to deliver. In this case, it is the perception that conventional politics is more interested in issues which, though important, don't impact the majority's everyday existence, but rather are driven by pressure from campaigning groups. The result is an impression that those in power don't have the time or the desire to focus on the things which really do affect people's daily lives.

The point from all this is that, as a Leader, you will have to focus on many different things. And in some countries, because of history or circumstances, maybe “delivery” is not the central thing. It could, in the moment, be about constitutional or institutional change. Or some aspect more to do with pure politics.

But, absent this, do not doubt for a single second, democracy or not or something in between, your task is to deliver.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Supreme Importance of Strategy

The word “strategy” derives from the Greek *strategia*—generalship. Without it, there is no leadership.

It is one of my favourite political words. It implies clarity of thinking, coherence, cohesion, something which relegates the short term to its proper place and assists the long-term fulfilment of the overall plan.

Its presence does not guarantee success; but its absence pretty much guarantees failure.

Strategy is about keeping the day-to-day aligned with the year-to-year; making sure that the political necessities—or what seem necessities of the moment—do not collide with the strategic objectives of the government that define its essential purpose.

This is not a plan. It is an attitude. A state of mind. Like a computer chip, which sends a warning sign to the Leader whenever it looks like a decision is tactically right but strategically wrong.

This state of mind has to be developed before the Leader takes office. It must come with the Leader, part of their indispensable furniture when they enter office.

And the reason is that, after assuming power, the Leader’s life can evolve fast into a *modus vivendi* which constitutes a conspiracy against the identification and implementation of strategy.

I meet a lot of Leaders in the first flush of governing and they tend to go through exactly the same process I did. At first, things seem reasonably well ordered. You’re giving instructions; the system is quite compliant; you

have some political space; you may feel somewhat overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility, but you're not yet overwhelmed by the burden of governing.

Strategy seems to be present almost without volition because everything seems relatively calm.

Then slowly but with gathering speed the business of government comes upon you. Instruction gives way to the challenge of delivery; best intentions bump up against intractable realities; meetings, domestic and international, proliferate; the politics which seemed settled becomes turbulent. Suddenly the day gets so busy, the time for reflection shrinks; the resting time becomes disturbed.

Therefore, it is wise to be mentally prepared for the challenge of having an awareness of the importance of strategy and keeping to it. It is why, earlier, I spoke of the importance of the schedule. You need to carve out the periods of time when you and those closest to you can return constantly to the job of reconciling the day-to-day tactics to the core strategy.

The difference between "tactics" and "strategy" is fundamental.

Tactics are important. They help you deliver your plan. Let's say a Leader needs a particular piece of legislation to pass. It is a major government reform. There are interests that may need assuaging, even buying off; there could be a tactical retreat on a certain non-vital part of it, to smooth its passage; or a special one-off alliance to secure the crucial goal of reform. All this is "tactics." Very necessary but all done in pursuit of the strategic objective.

But if the retreat is on a signal part of the legislation, the assuaging undermines the purpose of legislating, or strategic failure is the price paid for a temporarily easier life, then don't do it. The momentary comfort will result in prolonged discomfort when the account of government achievement arrives.

The confusion of tactics and strategy is one of the principal reasons why Leaders fail. They face a crisis. They take a measure to avert it. The measure meets the moment. But it collides with the politics of the final

goal. Result: incoherence. The plan shrivels. The people lose confidence. The government takes a step closer to losing power.

The recent cost of living crisis that engulfed governments around the world is a case in point. Soon into the crisis, caused principally by external factors—energy crunch, war, etc.—it became clear that the sheer scale of the rise in gas prices was so steep that governments would have to bear a lot of the bill. The governments which came through it best were those that took measures—albeit unprecedented and costly—which at least to a significant degree aligned with their overall strategic objectives. For example, those combining subsidy with incentives to reduce energy demand, reform the long-term energy market and help meet climate targets. Those that just bunged money at the problem without strategic thought found the bills unaffordable and retreat without cohesion inevitable.

Once this starts to happen with a government, it is usually the beginning of the end—because the system begins to act randomly and so the tactics masquerading as strategy, but in fact denoting its absence, multiply. Incoherence begets incoherence. The people lose faith. Direction is lost and policies start to look like a set of individual forays into bits of the policy undergrowth without any consistent connectivity to the ultimate destination.

The strategy should remain fixed; it's the tactics which should alter. Flexibility with the latter; steadfastness with the former. Usually.

As ever, with the rule comes an exception. Things can happen, often external events the Leader has little control over, which change the foundational facts the strategy is based on.

At the turn of the twenty-first century Leaders in Europe generally believed that the era of big power conflict was over. Building up of armed forces had limited political purchase, and listed quite low on most governments' priorities. Then came Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Policy changed. Defence strategy changed. Because the facts upon which previous strategy was based also changed.

In the case of Ukraine, this change was so dramatic and vivid, it didn't take huge political discernment to spot it and to adjust strategy accordingly.

Sometimes, however, it is harder to identify when something has shifted—not the surface issues but the fundamentals. I was sometimes too slow to spot such instances.

An interesting example, which shows how strategy should always be kept under review, is the relevance to economic growth of a modern industrial strategy.

The conventional wisdom when I was in office was that governments should steer clear of anything resembling “picking winners,” as in a government trying to direct a particular industry or interfering with the generally smooth running of the market. France was considered an outlier in its “industrial champions” strategy, and there was a view that that strategy was not necessarily one to be emulated.

As with so much else, the technology revolution requires a reconsideration of this strategy of strict separation between market and government. Not a return to old-style “industrial strategy,” which meant propping up industries which needed market-driven reform, but a recognition that without government taking a lively interest in how certain sectors of vital strategic importance are supported, the country will be less economically powerful and therefore the people poorer.

In Britain's case, this might mean supporting life sciences, and making sure the country retains its strong position in the strategically vital sector of AI.

In the case of France, it might be about attracting foreign investment, particularly in the financial sector where Brexit has given Paris an opportunity.

In the USA, a strategic industrial policy has led to a massive boost to green energy and industry.

All over Africa, countries are shaping up to reform their agricultural sectors; trying to ensure the industrialisation of their raw commodities to

which they need desperately to add value, rather than shipping the commodities out to other countries who gain that value.

These are all positions which the previous governments of those countries might have shied away from, or ignored. As circumstances change, however, so too should strategy.

So be firm in the adherence to strategy. But not rigid. John Maynard Keynes's saying that "when the facts change, I change my mind" remains a very sensible adage for Leaders to live by. It's important to note, however, that this is the amendment of strategy not the discarding of it. It doesn't mean yielding up the basic principle: keep strategic coherence; don't make the short term the enemy of the long term.

When Germany committed to the shutdown of its nuclear power sector following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear reactor accident in Japan, it met the prevailing public sentiment on nuclear energy. But fast-forward a decade and with the energy crisis and climate obligations, the tactical decision has collided with the strategic necessity of protecting living standards and reducing emissions.

All these questions of strategy require careful analysis, deep thought and constant reassessment. The challenge for the Leader is to remain on top of the strategic while battling the day-to-day.

On the day, the issues that dominate the headlines will seem the only things that matter, and the temptation will be huge to do whatever settles them in that moment of time. Follow that course without regard to the long-term strategic consequence, and, yes, at the end of that day, you will heave a sigh of relief. But at a later date you will rue that decision, and shake your head in regret. Because it will inhibit, possibly fatally, your capacity to be a change-maker.

CHAPTER NINE

Be a Change-maker, Not a Place-holder

You're put in a position of leadership to make decisions. These can be decisions of commission. They can also be decisions of omission: when a Leader decides not to decide, that is still a decision, with consequences. Drift is a policy. It's just that it's not a very good one.

When I visited Shimon Peres—Israel's extraordinary prime minister, president and general political philosopher—he told me of a conversation he'd had with one of his successors when he saw him in the prime minister's official residence in Jerusalem. The successor was hesitating over how best to handle the peace process. Shimon finally said to him: "Look, you have a choice: you are here in this famous address as Leader of the country. Do you want to be in the history book or the visitors' book?"

If you're satisfied with the status quo as a Leader, you're unusual. Most Leaders have attained that position precisely by attacking the status quo. They also know that they were elected for a reason—to change people's lives for the better.

In any case, political inactivity is scarcely an option in a world that is changing so fast—indeed one that is characterised by the scope, scale and speed of change. When I was prime minister, Twitter (or X) didn't exist, I had no mobile phone (something for which I have always, in retrospect, been grateful), the internet was if not in its infancy in its adolescence, Amazon was simply an online bookshop, Netflix hadn't been heard of; but more important, artificial intelligence was a concept not a revolution in progress, climate change was still hotly disputed, China was very much a developing nation, the Gulf countries mere petro-states, Britain a leader in

Europe, Russia part of what was then the G8, India considered “Third World,” and the USA embroiled in the post-9/11 fight against global jihadism.

At the turn of the millennium, the top ten companies in the world by market capitalisation comprised Microsoft, General Electric, Cisco, Walmart, Exxon, Intel, NTT Docomo, Royal Dutch Shell, Pfizer and Nokia. Today only one of those organisations—Microsoft—makes the list, which now boasts such enterprises as Apple, NVIDIA and Amazon.

Technology companies dominate, with market caps far in excess of the largest companies twenty years ago.

It’s a new world! With all the challenges and opportunities novelty on this scale brings.

So, if you as a Leader are not a change-maker in such a world, it is you who are likely to be changed.

The Covid-19 crisis brought this lesson home, even if most people didn’t think to analyse it in this way.

Just reflect on it. We had the modern world’s first global pandemic. Tragically, it killed millions of people. It infected billions. And it shut the world down for a time. Yet ultimately, we came through it, the economy recovered far better than anyone might have anticipated, so did most of those who got sick, and we learnt a slew of lessons which should help us get through the next pandemic faster and with less pain.

Don’t misunderstand me. I know that Covid is still circulating, the threat of new variants remains, the long Covid effects are still being worked out. But compare where we are to where we might have been, and what should impress us is our capacity for adaptation and survival, not our propensity for disaster.

How did we do this? We invented vaccines in record time, including those under the hitherto unheard-of nomenclature of mRNA, manufactured them, distributed them and—yes, albeit with much shameful inequality along the way—got them into the arms of more than half the world’s population. Today there is the prospect of a whole new generation of

vaccines and preventive injectables with the potential to save tens of millions of lives from communicable and non-communicable disease.

We created tests that worked in minutes to gauge infectiousness. We developed genomic sequencing which should allow us to build an early warning system to spot new pathogens, as well as in the longer term revolutionising diagnostics not only in medicine and disease detection but in agricultural production and beyond.

We couldn't mix socially during the pandemic. So, we resorted to Zoom. We couldn't work in the office. So, we worked from home. In the process we found not only that working in this way was feasible but that there were even some advantages to it. Of course, we all wanted lockdowns to end, but we kept going. And in the handling of the crisis, science and technology sprinted ahead in ways we did and did not expect.

The lessons of the Covid experience for governing are immense: urgency begat effectiveness, necessity begat inventiveness, desperation begat an upending of traditional silos and bureaucracy in government. We all displayed the capacity to change swiftly.

This was in a sense "wartime." But though the pressure on government to be as radical diminishes in peacetime, the fact of change does not. It is happening all the time. Government needs to acknowledge that fact. If the world around you is moving forward, and you're standing still, you get left behind.

So, all this is to emphasise: you should be a change-maker, not a placeholder.

Change, usually by way of reform, is in the circumstances of today almost akin to a duty. But it's also, unfortunately, the hardest thing to do.

The problem is that everyone nods in agreement when you talk about reform in principle; they just think it should apply to someone else.

In government, I was always trying to make reforms. And over time, I learnt that the process of reform has a certain rhythm to it. When you first propose a reform, people tell you it's a bad idea; when you're doing it, it's hell; and after you have done it, you wish you'd done more of it.

No change worth making comes without pain. Throughout the process, therefore, you will encounter resistance. It must be met with persistence.

Persistence, however, has to be combined with hard-headed realism. Try to change a whole system at once and you will probably fail. Make change step by step. That doesn't mean the change is not at each step radical; just that if you try to get to the destination point in a rush, those opposing it will find it easier to mobilise and will use the pain of upheaval to demonstrate that the whole reform project is flawed.

It's also important to create a constituency for the change. The benefits may lie a considerable way off and their full extent be unknown, but some people at least will be brave enough to acknowledge what might be achieved, some will understand that the change is actually to their advantage, and, if properly courted, some will come to see themselves as joint stakeholders vested in the reform.

To win converts, communicate the reform in language and terms the public will relate to. Weave it into the narrative for the government. Iterate and reiterate its purpose and its meaning. You're a Leader, not a technocrat. So, couch the message not in the form of summarising the functional things the reform will achieve, important though those are, but as underpinning the values you as a Leader believe in, the reason you sought the position of leadership. In other words, show how the change fits with the grand scheme of things, the plan. Don't simply recite the factual details.

The best reforms are those which become self-sustaining—that is, they don't need the Leader or the government to be constantly on the case because, once done, the reform has injected an agent of change into the system which has its own momentum independent of government oversight.

Governments are not great engines of innovation. They can innovate but they're not perpetually innovating. They can create but then they regard the job as done. They can, with the right leadership, change the status quo. But then there is a new status quo.

Or they begin but get diverted. Or the people charged with the reform change. Or the focus dissipates. A thousand different things.

So, ideally, you should make a reform that, once made, allows those empowered by it to take charge. Because, chances are, they won't be diverted.

Let me illustrate these various points by reference to the reforms my government made in education and healthcare. At the heart of the reforms was the idea of putting the parent/pupil and the patient first; i.e., consumer not producer interests.

For education that meant allowing schools independence from local government control, enabling them to form partnerships with the private sector, and giving them much greater freedom to hire and manage staff as they saw fit. So far as parents were concerned, they were empowered to choose a school for their children, if they felt the nearest one was giving a poor service.

This was particularly important in inner cities. In Hackney in East London, schools went from around 20 per cent of youngsters achieving the necessary grades at sixteen to over 80 per cent; and in another London borough one of the state schools last year sent more of their students to Oxford and Cambridge Universities than Eton.

For healthcare, in the UK's National Health Service, the reform gave patients a choice as to health provider and brought private sector providers into the provision of NHS services.

Both reforms were met with significant hostility, from teachers on the one hand and the medical profession on the other.

During my first term in office, I tried whole-system reforms—performance-related pay for teachers, for example, and targets for doctors and hospitals. They didn't really work. During my second term, we adopted a different approach. We aimed for systemic, structural reform, but began in a limited way and built up our reforms over time. So, for example, we created academy schools—rather like charter schools in the USA—but began with just a few in those inner-city areas that were worst provided for. When it came to healthcare reform, we got the private sector involved to

help bring down the long waiting lists for basic orthopaedic operations in the NHS. It was reasonably simple to do and was hard to resist.

These reforms became agents of change. As people saw schools improving and hospital waiting lists coming down, more of them came to support what was being done and, as time went on, to do so with increasing confidence and vigour. We were careful, though, to combine reform with investment in the basic infrastructure—school buildings and new health centres. It wasn't all pain for the system.

I fear that, too often, we failed to express our reforms in big-picture language and that we were too technocratic. But when we did it well, we reframed the argument not just in terms of the practical achievements of the changes, but in how they reflected a commitment to social justice. Good education and healthcare had largely been the prerogative of the well-to-do. Now, we said, both were available to the majority of the population dependent on state provision.

Today, the technology revolution offers further springboards and opportunities for reform. In healthcare, it promises to transform diagnostics and treatment, giving patients vastly improved control of their own conditions, using data to manage healthcare systems more efficiently, and reinventing life science. In education, it offers the prospect of bringing the best teachers in the world into the classroom and allowing pupils to learn at the pace most suited to them. The curriculum, concepts of class sizes, the role of the teacher, all have the potential to be radically changed through technological progress.

In the public sector more broadly, there are opportunities for biometric ID to enable interaction with government online; advances in DNA and facial recognition to improve law and order; not to mention transformation in the efficacy of everything from government procurement and smart cities to energy consumption and electric vehicles.

Sometimes when I talk with front-line politicians today, I find they're extraordinarily pessimistic about the possibilities of change. The money has

run out, the politics is tough, the systems seem bolted into the edifice of government, impervious to change, and it all seems a little overwhelming.

I say, in response, this is an exciting time to be in government. The potential for change, the necessity of it in fact, is enormous. And so are the instruments, particularly in technology, at your disposal. It just requires the study to work out what those instruments are and the courage to take them in hand and use them.

Being a change-maker has never been more important, but also never been more achievable. So, go to it!

If you're not a change-maker in the circumstances of today, you are a place-holder, and pretty soon everyone will know that.

It will be tough, but if you don't step up to the challenge, the visitors' book is where you will end up!

CHAPTER TEN

Le Suivi: Delivering

Accepting it's all about delivery is not the same as delivering. The first is about understanding that “delivery” is the supreme political test; the second is understanding how to do it. Guess which is harder.

One of the most disconcerting lessons I learnt early in government was that, although I had a lot of power as prime minister, having the power and being able to exercise it were two different things.

When I sat for the first time in the prime minister's chair at the Cabinet table in Downing Street (the only chair with arms to it), I naively assumed that if I decided something, then that “something” would happen. My decision would be transmitted through the faithful system and its substance and intent faithfully implemented.

To my shock and discomfort, I realised, over time, that this was a serious misconception. Very often, nothing would happen. The “system” would learn of the decision, consider it, play around with it, have a vague stab at implementing it (on a good day), absorb it—and then bury it.

To be fair, this was not purely because the system was resistant to change.

More fundamentally and simply, it was because change is very difficult to make. It requires, as we have seen, good policy work and able personnel. It also requires a system that is geared to, focused upon and relentlessly pursuing delivery.

Thus, I became obsessed with what the French call *le suivi*. The follow-through. The move from vision to policy to implementation.

I mentioned earlier how in my second term in office we reorganised Downing Street and the centre of government to create more effective systems to deliver on core priorities. One of those creations was the Delivery Unit. It was an innovation so successful that it is now copied around the world by governments seeking to improve execution at the centre and often within particular ministries. Versions of it are advocated by consulting firms such as McKinsey.

As I said in Chapter 1, some things that government decides to do, while they may be complex at multiple levels politically, are relatively simple to carry out once agreed. They're a matter of legislation or of administrative diktat—the decision is the implementation, as it were. So, for example, when we introduced the minimum wage in the UK, we had to get the measure through Parliament, but once agreed it was done. Tick. Or take public sector worker pay. You want to increase it? You make the decision. It's done.

Where the challenge comes is when your decision involves deep systemic change. In part, this is because vested interests in embedded systems get in the way. But it's also because change of a systemic nature is genuinely complex. Reform of health, education or legal systems; welfare or subsidy payments; immigration and asylum processes; digitisation of government; spreading the use of technology solutions in the public sector—these are all obvious to try, but, as experience shows, difficult to do. They involve grappling not just with “what” is to be done but “how” it is to be done, and the “how” often involves a degree of technical knowledge of which civil servants and their political masters have, at best, only a limited understanding.

Those countries that tried using their own government health experts to create a Covid vaccine almost universally failed. Those like the USA and the UK who put the private sector in charge succeeded.

Think of all those extraordinary NASA space missions. Amazing work. Brilliant science. But it took Elon Musk to revive the industry and make spacecraft reusable thus slashing what were otherwise unaffordable costs.

There is a reason why the Soviet five-year plans basically failed. The failure was inherent. There was determination to meet a target but no ingenuity in achieving it and no flexibility to alter it.

Implementation depends on the support and cooperation—or at least acquiescence—of many actors. It requires breaking down the different components of the change, understanding all the different dimensions of it, and—vital—tracking that what is supposed to happen does, in fact, happen.

The private sector is familiar with such processes and tends to be better at them. But, then, to be frank, it's easier for the non-state sector. Yes, there are special interests that resent or oppose change, and employees who are resistant to it, but, in the end, the leadership will get what it wants, the market will likely be pushing it, and there's no politics to get in the way. If the managers get things wrong or have to abandon the change, they will be sacked, the company will lose money or go out of business. For governments, the ability to cancel or change course is harder, and the cost of failure much higher.

I always say to business people who complain about the processes of government: come and try it—it's a darn sight harder than you think.

Hence the Delivery Unit, which was born out of the belief, based on my experience during my first term in office, that we needed something constructed specifically to deal with this challenge of implementation.

Over time we learnt how to make it work most effectively. And now, with my institute's experience in helping set up Delivery Units all over the world, we can see there are certain clear rules as to how such units should be established and how to make them function.

Foremost among these is the vital importance of choosing a limited number of priorities the unit should focus on—the priorities being those things the Leader most cares about. That stump speech I wrote about earlier where the Leader imagines what they want to list as achievements when seeking re-election, or leaving office for that matter, those are the things the Delivery Unit should be tasked with.

This point needs to be emphasised. I sometimes come across governments whose Delivery Unit is effectively a planning ministry for the whole government. It never works. The Delivery Unit is not meant to shadow the government. It is a focused, targeted, laser-beam-like instrument of delivery of the Leader's priorities. And only works as such.

Those priorities should be measurable, as objectives and key results (OKRs) are in the private sector. If you can't measure it, forget it—at least for Delivery Unit purposes. A goal of reducing poverty or providing jobs for the youth? That's too vague. A specific poverty reduction programme or youth employment policy with specific targets for delivery? Yes, that works.

We used the Delivery Unit to reduce waiting lists for hospital treatment, to cut unjustified asylum claims, to deliver the schools reform programme. These were all measurable reforms. Success was clear. Failure couldn't be concealed.

It's also essential that the Leader is personally and intimately involved in the work of the Delivery Unit, that the system knows its authority is vested in him or her, and that if the system offends the unit, it knows it is offending the Leader. When the Delivery Unit picks up the phone to talk to a ministerial department, or even a minister, the recipient of the call must know that they're speaking to the source of power and not merely to a functionary. This cannot be done through assertion. It is done by demonstration and example.

While I was prime minister, I ran a session every month for each of the unit's priorities—at which the relevant government minister would be present—where the Delivery Unit team would make a presentation that set out what progress had, or hadn't, been made on the particular priority. I did this not only because I wanted to know what was happening, but because I wanted to demonstrate that the priorities were mine, that they were owned by me, and that the unit was doing my bidding and was accountable to me. Presentations were carefully structured: priority, progress, problems, path through them.

Those who serve in the Delivery Unit have to be chosen with enormous care. As a rule, outsiders with specialist knowledge should be part of the team. Of course, there's a strong risk that they will be treated with suspicion by the insiders, but working with the system but not formed by it, they will hugely improve delivery capacity.

General suspicion is, in any case, inevitable, at least at first. Ministers and ministries will view the Delivery Unit as an interference from the centre—an unnecessary irritation at best, a threat at worst. In time, if things are managed properly, they will come to see it as an aid, an advantage, an additional reinforcing mechanism of their own position, and they can also bask in the delivery success. But to begin with, they will be wary.

One key priority for the Delivery Unit function is to assemble the right data. Get the facts, I would always say. The ministries will tell you “Don't worry, everything is fine, it is on track.” By the time you find out it isn't so, it will be too late. So, part of the Delivery Unit's job is to search out the truth, leave no stone unturned, no obstacle hidden or unaddressed.

That's no easy task. Situational unawareness, as I found, especially after 9/11 when we were scrambling to protect the nation's security and to engage with different countries and cultures, can be a chronic limitation on efficacy, appreciated too late.

However, it matters in the more mundane terrain of systemic reform of services, too. The Leader needs to know the situation on the ground, to have first-hand awareness of the challenges the services are struggling with, and not to assume they know but to be confident that they do. The Delivery Unit should be the forager after the reality, the real-world link between the government and the governed.

Lastly, to lead a government you have to know what the government you're leading is doing—or not doing! Preparing for Prime Minister's Questions was a slog, but the one benefit was you discovered a great deal about what was happening beneath you. Supposedly under your leadership. And some of it was horrifying. Bits of bureaucracy gone mad. Policies that

some bright spark had decided would light up their ministry, of which you were completely unaware.

The Delivery Unit function is to make you aware that what you want done is being done, and to give you a mechanism to correct course if delivery goes awry.

Across government, the same mentality should prevail. What is true for the Leader—prime minister or president—should be true for the departments under them. Ministers also should know their priorities (hopefully aligned roughly with the Leader's) and be similarly focused on implementation.

In every organisation, the toughest task is turning promise into proof.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Sugaring the Long-term Changes: Quick Wins

The problem with long-term change is just that: it's long term and politics and politicians tend to have short-term horizons. In a democracy, there are elections and election cycles; and even when the people aren't electors, or not in a serious competitive sense, they are still "the people."

Most long-term gain is via short-term pain. It usually involves structural reform. It means taking on established systems, vested interests and, almost invariably, has its losers who can immediately identify themselves and its winners who can't, but who are the unnamed beneficiaries of the future when the reform has materialised. The former shout loudly; the latter stay silent.

There is no real achievement in government without such change because the pain is the path to the gain; and often the more the pain, the more the gain, because the change is large in scope and fundamental in effect.

I say to the presidents and prime ministers I work with: start the process of long-term reform early because it likely will not yield results until near the end of the first term.

However, many reforms will not come through even after your first term has expired. If you're lucky enough to get another term, you will see the benefit practically and politically.

But of course, you still have to get through that first term, and that is the worry for Leaders.

Hence you need to sugar the pill, which means you need to look for where and how you get the “quick wins.” There is nothing more sure to make a politician’s ears prick up than discussion of “quick wins.” About the earliest lesson in the harsh realities of governing is that the people’s expectations run far ahead of any mortal’s ability to deliver. So within a terrifyingly short timescale, people begin to moan: you promised change, but I see no sign of it; you said you would transform the country, but my life is still shit; it’s always jam tomorrow and I want some today; you politicians are all the same; etc., etc., etc., as Yul Brynner said in the musical *The King and I*.

It’s all unreasonable and reasonable at the same time. It’s reasonable to expect that a politician winning an election on the basis of change will make the change. And it’s unreasonable to think it can arrive fast. The expectation is understandable and the reality irrefutable. But then, that’s why politics is a tough business.

So, you need to effect some change quickly enough to keep the hope up. A “quick win” is one that comes in a year, max two. It gives you a sliver of achievement to lay before the impatient to prove that in time it’s just possible more will come. It’s a persuader of good intentions; an earnest of trust.

It’s nothing to be overly proud of: the long-term structural change is the matter of pride. But it’s a necessary short-term tactic for the survival essential to deliver the long term.

Quick wins come in many shapes and sizes. But the characteristics they share are that they have impact, in a circumscribed timescale, in a manner which the people notice, and in a form through which they subscribe the win to the Leader.

They can be purely political: the removal of some hated institution or law; the appointment of a credible anti-corruption tsar; the embrace of a former political opponent to demonstrate national unity. These are political signals, indicating a different approach, set of values, order of priorities. They’re effective to a degree, but the risk is that because they’re not “daily

life” things, they can often appeal more to the political elite than the real people.

They can be a well-targeted expenditure of money. I am well aware that spending money is the easiest thing in government and the least politically courageous. Basically, any idiot can do it. However, doing it in a way that doesn’t clash with the long-term changes; that makes the largesse vaguely proportionate to the affordability from the point of view of the country’s finances; that reaches the right people, and makes a difference in their lives—that is a skill. India’s prime minister Narendra Modi’s promise of proper toilet access for all was a classic example. Easy to grasp; big in effect; and because of the sanitation implications, sensible long term.

It could be a new road in a rural area or improved access to electricity—bearing in mind that approximately a third of African homes are without it. Now, the advent of satellite technology, which for rural areas is much more effective than cable, to bring the internet within reach of every community, is a great quick win for Leaders, as my institute is proving in a growing number of countries all over the world.

Technology is the new field of quick wins. Digitising government services; cutting out the middleman in any state payments by digital transfer; creating new apps—for rural farmers, for example. Even introducing a digital ID or smart health card can ensure recognition that things are changing and can be done in half of a term of government.

The best things therefore are either physically tangible—you can touch them, see them, feel them; or virtually tangible. Whichever way, the impact is undeniable. That is why Leaders traditionally went for infrastructure projects. They’re a physical reality. You just have to make sure that they are the right projects, and they make a difference to the right people in the right places. And now their virtual equivalents can be just as big a “quick win” and sometimes better and faster.

If possible, avoid subsidy, or at least the old-fashioned simple bung or sweetener. The problem with subsidies is they’re popular for sure; but they’re virtually impossible to take away even if the costs then spiral or the

original justification declines in significance. And at some point, someone—the IMF for example—will come along and tell your public it's a really bad idea.

Best of all is when the win symbolises and enriches the basic narrative of the government. We did this when we introduced the minimum wage. It worked at every level. It was beneficial; it was affordable; and most of all it symbolised a new approach, with different and better values.

When you come into government, don't assume that the best “quick wins” are the ones you conceived of in opposition. Take your time. Not too long naturally, but long enough that when you have looked under the hood of government and seen what is possible, you have an informed idea of what is quick and what is a win.

Finally, though you shouldn't be too excited about what is, in the end, a mere tactic, don't be so purist as not to do it. You need quick wins. You need something to talk about that is plain, simple and popular. The rest of your government needs it.

For governments in the developing world, who receive support from the international donor community, there is an important avenue of opportunity to secure some quick wins without damaging the already fragile public finances. It is worth spending some time and energy thinking about what the donors would support, and seeing if a quick win can be tailored around it. The donor community responds far better to clear, worked-out plans which, preferably, mean that they also participate in the righteous glow from the “win.” So, fashion them accordingly.

Done well, the quick wins give you breathing space for what really matters: changes that mean the next generation does better than the current one, and the future is brighter than the past; changes that demonstrate that politics done well alters the lives of the people for the better.

But these are the hard ones.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Nothing Is Inevitable in Politics, Neither Defeat nor Victory

Often, I hear politicians or commentators talk of the political fortunes of a party or a person as certain. Certain to fail. Certain to succeed.

There is no such thing.

Of course, there are probabilities. There are likely outcomes. If you're trailing 20 points in the polls and there is a short time until an election, you will look like you're beaten. Or 20 points ahead and you will look like you're in. For sure.

Except that nothing is for sure in politics.

The interesting question is: if it seems as if defeat or victory beckons, what can the Leader do to avoid the one and secure the other?

Let's assume you're staring at defeat.

First work out the reasons why. This can be harder than you think, because those around you and possibly you yourself may well have sunk into delusion or denial. Work out what's really at the bottom of people's predilection for your opponents or more pertinently their disdain for you.

The British Labour Party's history is unfortunately an object lesson in the power of self-deception. As its recent history shows.

It lost in 2010 (though no party commanded a majority), because it moved somewhat but enough from being New Labour to be too much like Old Labour. It lost in 2015 (giving the Conservative Party its majority), because it had moved sharply left. It then suffered a monumental defeat in 2019 because it had moved ultra left.

At each stage, it swallowed the extraordinary proposition that the people were voting Tory because Labour was insufficiently left wing. Quite why the British people should have behaved so irrationally was never explained. But the belief in this delusion was absolute—as it had been in the 1970s and 80s and even to a degree in the 1990s.

Only now has the Labour Party, thankfully for those who need it, come to its senses under new and effective leadership.

The Conservatives will eventually rue the time they allowed Euroscepticism, in a perversion of Thatcherism, to dominate their party. They could have won all the last elections without it; and finally, they will lose power for longer than they need because of it.

So, confronting why you're doing badly requires a clear-headed analysis of what's bugging the people about you, which can't be put to one side for reasons of difficulty, sensitivity or, least of all, ideology.

If you're in opposition, this ought to be reasonably straightforward, though it is extraordinary how regularly oppositions confuse the world as it is with the world as they wish it to be.

If you're in government, it can be more tricky. Governments can be unpopular when doing "the right thing." Reforms will be hated while in progress. Leaders can be measured against unreasonable standards of perfection as the nation vests its hopes in them. Public sentiment can be swayed by a succession of scandals or bad news.

You then have to measure not just the breadth but the depth of this feeling, quality as well as quantity. Opinion polls are snapshots. Significant but still only that. How firm the numbers are is a whole other thing. People might answer the polling question by giving the answer they think they should give, not necessarily what they truly believe, or the answer that recent negative coverage suggests. But none of this goes deep. A puff of wind can unsettle it.

The fundamentals, though, may be different. And they do go deep. Has the government got a plan? Is it acting, even if unpopularity, strategically? And, of course, is it delivering? What do people really think? And I mean

real “people,” those who are not political activists, who don’t feel strongly about politics, who don’t devour the news schedules, who don’t listen to political podcasts, who don’t talk about politics at the dinner table, i.e., THE MAJORITY.

They ask a very simple question as the day of judgement approaches: what’s best for me and my family?

That’s why the famous catchphrase in the Clinton campaign for the American presidency, “It’s the economy, stupid,” is so frequently cited. Because it’s basically true. If security is at risk, that may trump it, of course. But by and large, people vote without reference to ideology according to their immediate interests: what will make their children and them better off, more prosperous.

Crime, public services, health, education, transport all feed into this, of course, but in the end, they matter because they affect that crucial sense of well-being. Better off is not just about the money in people’s pockets but about the quality of life as it is affected by those things for which government is responsible.

A credible economic offer of hope for a better future is preconditional. Without it, you lose. And I think that is for sure.

And it is an essential component of a campaign for re-election.

Re-election begins with a focus on what the priorities will be for the next term in office.

“Mantra” is a word originally found in Hinduism and Buddhism, meaning either the thought behind an action or something repeated continually to aid concentration. And I always say a good mantra to think about for re-election is: A LOT DONE; A LOT TO DO; A LOT TO LOSE.

A LOT DONE is a claim of achievement necessary to support the idea you have not been wasting the people’s time during the existing mandate.

A LOT TO DO is an acknowledgement: you haven’t met all the expectations, and recognise the task ahead, but know what it is.

A LOT TO LOSE is a warning: vote for the other lot and what has been gained up to now will be lost.

The first is boastful without the humility of the second. The second is an admission of failure without the first. The last is a reminder to the people that the standard they should apply is one of choice not perfection.

You need them all together.

I remember just before my first re-election campaign, when we were ahead in the polls and frankly coasting a little, taking a call from Bill Clinton, recently retired as president. “How are you doing?” he asked. “Oh, fine,” I replied; “you know, we’re explaining all the things we’ve done, reciting the achievements.” “Hmm,” he said; “well, in that case they may just say thank you very much and goodbye.”

The point he was making—which correctly shook me out of coasting mode—is that it is always about the future and therefore simply saying what you have done is not enough unless you spell out what you still have to do, which is the reason you are asking people to re-elect you.

It’s better if your party is united. But it’s a myth that a divided party is bound to fail. It is never division in itself that causes defeat but division that obscures direction. In other words, provided the Leader is in charge and capable of exerting authority and giving clarity of direction, the fact they have those within the ranks who are in disagreement will ultimately not prevent victory. But if the division is one which they look incapable of resolving in the manner the leadership wants, so that there is neither the sense of the Leader in charge nor the clear direction, that is fatal.

When leading the Labour Party, I had plenty of people who were forever disagreeing, speaking out, complaining. But the public knew I was in control. In fact, at points, the disagreements were helpful since they underlined the degree to which the control was being exercised.

So, all those qualities described in the previous chapters—strategy, having a plan, focus on delivery, strength as Leader—if you can find the time, the intelligence and the energy to embrace them, things can always be rescued.

It won't happen without them; but with them, particularly if you can draw a contrast with your opponent, you have a fighting chance, and that's as good as it gets in politics.

What is the problem? What is the solution? The deep problem, the deep solution.

If you do this with no holds barred, delusions scattered, details accounted for, embracing even the most painful awareness, you can still pull it back.

Conversely, you can be ahead, and all may still be lost. If the probable victory is based on transient negativity for your opponents, sentiments which don't run deep, and your policies are partially but not completely ready, your weaknesses not remedied because mistakenly you think the lead is so comfortable you don't need to remedy them, or you haven't planned the strategy with the precision required, well, you can end up with a nasty shock.

One president I worked with—a good guy, who had won twice—was sure that he could choose his successor and get him elected. The polls were favourable. The president's own standing, if not stellar, was reasonable.

But if he had taken a step back and analysed the situation, he would have recognised that the would-be successor was old and not energetic, that his programme was lacklustre, and that his opponent was vigorous and promising change.

There wasn't a strategy, a plan or strength in execution. Come polling day, the lead evaporated.

There was another important lesson from that campaign which applies generally.

Never underestimate your opponent. Better, to a fault, to overestimate them. Treat them with respect. Work out their weaknesses but start by working out their strengths.

I remember when people on the progressive side of politics would disparage Ronald Reagan—"brainless," "superficial," "too old," "too

folksy,” etc.—and I would say, well, given he’s beaten our side twice, what does that make us? You could ask the same question today of those who snorted with derision at Joe Biden before he won the presidential election in 2020.

If your opponent is a proven winner, assume they have something which has allowed them to win. If they’re a contender and you don’t believe in the inevitability of your victory, ask what their appeal is and how you counter it.

At regular junctures I have praised the necessity of staying cool, of dispassion. It’s never more important than when contemplating supposedly sure-fire victory or defeat. You can always come back if you are clever enough to discover and chart the route; and you can always lose your way before the finishing line by being cocky, complacent or failing to go deep enough to see what brings that line into focus and within reach.

And if all that makes you anxious as a Leader, in this limited instance, that’s an anxiety that’s healthy.

PART III

Policy Lessons

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Your First Duty: Keeping People Safe

As I've said before, it's a good rule of thumb when contemplating policy to start by thinking about yourself not as a politician but as a normal person. What do you want from government? Well, lots of things. Good economic policy; public services; some sort of attachment to decency and integrity. And so on. But the first thing you want to know is that it's going to try to keep you and your family safe.

If you don't feel safe, nothing else in your life is going to compensate for the absence of basic security.

Politicians, particularly from the progressive left, constantly underestimate this; or, even worse, sometimes seem to sympathise as much with the perpetrator of crime as the victim.

But, in my experience, ordinary law-abiding folk feel quite viscerally about crime and security. They dislike being threatened or feeling threatened.

Now, security can come in different forms—or rather the threats to it can do so.

There are the big macro security threats. There is the threat of invasion, or of actions by state or non-state actors. And then there are the threats of everyday criminality.

Obviously, they require very different responses and preparations. But the basic principle is the same: the first duty of government is to keep the people safe.

There has been a threat from extremism these last decades from Islamist jihadists and more recently from the far right. 9/11 changed security policy the world over. I know there is a common view that America overstretched to deal with the terrorist threat, but in the aftermath of the worst terrorist attack the world had seen, there was at the time not much support for understretch; and as I saw first hand, the American president and people were determined that the response be so overwhelming that no one would again attempt such an act.

Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression is not only to defend their country for today but to deter any possible repeat of that aggression in the future.

The actions against Tigrayan separatism in Ethiopia; the struggles against Boko Haram in Nigeria; the military campaign of Saudi Arabia and the UAE in Yemen: the point is not to debate the wisdom of the individual policy, but to emphasise that, for governments, controlling the security space is essential even if it means a fight on the country's own territory, even with its own people, even with its own neighbours.

One of the commonest threats today is from Islamist terrorism. Many countries face it. All try to overcome it, with varying degrees of success.

The reality is that if the government cannot properly deal with it, a country will be in trouble, destabilised and insecure. The people are distracted and worried, business feels nervous, society fractures, a country's progress is stalled at best and disintegrates at worst. People lose faith in the long term and therefore play for the short term only. No nation can prosper like that.

Right now, in the Sahel region of Africa, democracy is under siege because governments can't defeat the jihadist menace that flows down from Libya into that band of countries across northern sub-Saharan Africa; and from there it is seeping into West Africa and in East Africa from Somalia down the eastern coast.

The result is that the efforts at development of both the countries themselves and the international donor community are rendered much less

impactful. Without security, development is impossible.

There is a common belief particularly among the NGO community that without development, security is at risk because, in the absence of hope of a better life, people turn to the solutions of the extremists. There is truth in this. And it is certainly correct that the extremists are adept at leaping on the back of local grievances and, a bit like Western populists, exploiting them.

However, while it is partially true, what is completely true is that if security dissolves, the chance of improvement and development dissolves with it. The coups which have removed governments across the Sahel were, in part, motivated by the failure of the democratically elected governments to perform that first essential duty. They couldn't keep the people safe. Security was more important to ordinary people than democracy.

Now, of course, it would have been better to have retained democracy, particularly in a country like Niger whose president was genuinely trying to make effective change, and to have improved the security situation through reform with outside help and not through paramilitary organisations like the Wagner group from Russia.

But the point is once the security battle is lost, the faith of the population in change and the prospect of progress goes with it.

Against these large threats emanating from groups with links across the world, governments need systems of security in place which require: intelligence-gathering, surveillance, precision weaponry, strong command and control centres; in other words, whole-system effective government.

Developed countries have the capacity to do this. The developing world often struggles. It would be wise if the developed world did more to help those developing countries in need. Because, quite apart from everything else, if those countries begin to destabilise, their citizens start to contemplate searching for a better life, and that usually means heading to Europe or America. However, that is another topic.

The developing world is the site of most of the terrorist threats globally today. Almost certainly, these countries' conventional security forces will be inadequate, lacking both specialist training and equipment. The only way to

correct this situation is therefore to bring help in from the outside. Many Western countries, like Britain and the USA and France, provide this help.

The point is: for the Leader faced with such a threat there is literally nothing more important than getting the means of defeating it. Don't be proud. Beg and borrow if you have to. Focus like a laser on it. Get your best people in charge of it. Find the best people anywhere you can to assist in making them better still. Mobilise the international community—the donors—to understand that if they're not helping you with this, it's no use them supporting a rural schools programme or smallholder farmers, because nothing else will work if security isn't working.

Mozambique has faced and is facing a jihadist threat in Cabo Delgado in the north of the country, where the country's enormous reserves of gas, crucial for economic development, are due to come on stream. The president was not afraid to ask for outside help as the country's forces struggled to get on top of the problem. As a result, the otherwise stalled gas project was renewed.

One final crucial point: your law enforcement agencies need to behave; need to have the discipline that, even when provoked, they don't mirror the conduct of the people they're fighting. So much damage is done when those supposed to uphold security start abusing their power, targeting "suspect" communities, heavy-handed at all times, not just when necessary.

This is much harder to accomplish than it sounds. Your security forces lose colleagues to the violence, they see atrocities, they become desperate in their desire to get results. But you must keep iron discipline, with commanders who understand that at least trying to bring local communities onside is a vital component of a strategy for success.

Security—the capacity to protect your country without and within—is number one. So if you come to power, and it is a problem, treat it like a crisis. Settle it before anything else.

More mundane but for normal life probably more important—in the developed world or stable developing nations anyway—is "law and order." In other words: protection from criminals and criminal behaviour.

I made my name on this issue as an aspiring Labour Leader. The Labour Party, like most of the left back in the 1990s, was thought to be “soft” on crime, keen to “blame” society, uncomfortable with ascribing individual responsibility, except in respect of white-collar crime, committed by “rich” people.

But I learnt two things about crime growing up. First, it is the poorest communities who suffer most from crime. They’re the ones with the drug-dealers next door, the gangs running the neighbourhood, the fear of venturing out, the hassle and the humiliation at the hands of bad people, their children given the worst role models.

Second, stay on that word “humiliation” for a moment. To be powerless in the face of crime is humiliating. And that matters to people. I remember the guy who urinated against the door of a house in my street and then threatened me with a knife when I tried to stop him. These things stick with you because in some way they aren’t just unpleasant but puncture your self-esteem.

I took up the issue of crime and made it a Labour issue. We say we represent the working people. So, represent them.

That, however, is just an attitude, if the right one. To deal with crime you need much more. Like everything else you need a strategy.

From my study of nations which have very low crime rates, it begins with culture. Zero tolerance is definitely right, in my view. Nothing that is bad behaviour affecting the peace of mind of the law-abiding should be tolerated.

In Western society today, we have decided, effectively, whatever language might be used from time to time by Leaders anxious to show they “get it,” to tolerate quite a lot. In inner cities gang culture is rife. Drug-dealing usually goes unpunished. Organised crime finds it reasonably easy to flourish. Many cases of burglary are not investigated. Court systems are ludicrously out of date and slow. And then those criminals who do end up in prison are often in what are essentially schools of crime not rehabilitation.

When I was in power, I focused a lot of attention on this issue, and ours was the first government in Britain since the Second World War to see crime fall. With a degree of success, had it been built upon, we would have made big strides towards being a world leader for a reasonably large, developed nation on crime.

Obviously, a lot of developing countries are in a similar position, though there, given the lack of resources, it is more understandable.

The fact nevertheless remains that, whatever the individual circumstances of a nation, once a degree of tolerance for criminality takes hold, it creates a dangerous culture. The criminal element, or some of it, thinks it's untouchable. The public lose hope. The system gives up. Too many rules, bureaucratic form-filling, procedures, inquiries which never begin, processes which never end.

If it gets really bad, then the risk is that some new Leader will arrive on the scene and say: screw the system and the rules and the processes. I am going to take a hammer to this nut and crack it. And surprise surprise, the general public will say hallelujah. Think President Bukele and his anti-gang programme in El Salvador.

The point is you can't uphold due process, unless the process is seen to deliver justice. And that doesn't mean simply to the accused.

So, if you don't want policy driven to extremes, act. You don't have to rip up due process, but you may well have to change it. Start from the proposition that what is intolerable will not in fact be tolerated; and work back from that.

As with any other issue, deconstruct the system, analyse what is not working, and then set out to fix it. You will find an enormous list of things which don't work, unfortunately. And the fixing will be tough. The police and investigating authorities will likely need more powers; and the granting of those powers will be fiercely contested.

The court system may need a complete overhaul. Technology solutions—everything from DNA records to surveillance operations to financial monitoring—may require new legal frameworks and capability.

Like the bigger national security issue, your law enforcement officers must protect communities, not exploit them or engage in corruption. There has to be a level of trust between police and local communities for this to work. But, just to take Britain as an example, I can honestly say that in my forty years in British politics, I never met a community that wanted less policing.

And here is the unalloyed good news for the Leader: tackling the challenge of “law and order” works electorally! Yes, believe it or not, people prefer to be safe.

Wherever I am in the world, I ask the Leader: what’s the crime like here? Usually I get an immediate response, good or bad. But sometimes to my astonishment I can tell they haven’t really thought about it.

Crime matters in many more dimensions than the obvious one of protecting society. Low crime is good for business. Someone is thinking of investing in your country. “Is it safe?” is one of the first questions! It’s good for tourism. If you’re choosing your holiday destination, guess which one you’re not choosing. The one you just read about in the papers as the location of some horrendous crime.

And it says something important about your country. Something not just about its culture but about its spirit. Crime is not an issue in Singapore because the authorities decided it was not going to be. The methods were without doubt at times open to question, but a narrative about the country was created: crime wasn’t going to be tolerated. Nothing stood in the way of that objective. This policy was not incidental to the success of Singapore, it was of the essence.

It was all about the leadership. As it always is.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Lessons for the Economy

Economies vary so much in nature that it seems counter-intuitive to imagine common lessons. What has the economy of THE USA got to do with that of Sierra Leone? How do you compare China with Myanmar? History, scale, resources, culture, geographical position, state of development—all these distinguishing characteristics make it hard, at first blush, to understand how circumstances so different in each case can, nonetheless, yield shared teachings.

For sure, First World developed countries do have certain things in common, as do the world's poorest nations. But there are also more general discernible principles than we think, even if they don't all apply equally in all cases. It's therefore very instructive to examine how, over the past half-century, some countries have advanced in economic prosperity while others have declined.

If we look at the most notable cases of progress, we see, in each case, decisions that were taken and implemented which led to transformative change.

In the late 1970s and 80s China, after decades of a tightly managed Communist economy, opened up to international trade and investment. In 2001, it joined the World Trade Organization. No country in the globe's history has achieved such economic and material advance on such a scale over the course of thirty years. But it started with a decision of leadership.

South Korea built itself after a prolonged conflict which divided the Korean peninsula and its people, going through a period of corrupt regimes

and military domination, until through leadership and reform it emerged in the twenty-first century as one of the world's economic powerhouses.

The countries of Eastern Europe joined the European Union and began some of the most remarkable political and economic reform in human experience. Poland—a country which struggled to shake off its Soviet shackles—has, through the reform programme demanded by the EU, become one of the wealthiest nations on the continent, with real wages rising in some years by almost 10 per cent.

The point is none of these stories is about chance or luck or some serendipitous event. Their success can be directly attributed to decisions of Leaders and governments.

I was prime minister of one of the world's largest economies. Since leaving office, through the Tony Blair Institute, I have worked with countries in the Gulf, in South East Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa whose economies vary hugely from that of the UK and from each other's. But there are clearly identifiable common features, lessons which apply—whatever the context, whatever the individual national characteristics—across cultures and in spite of multiple and diverse challenges.

First and foremost, all successful nations have sought, obtained and sustained macroeconomic stability. Fiscal and monetary policy has been pursued with consistency and obedience to the basic precepts of balancing accounts, affordable debt levels, keeping the currency honest, independent central banks (usually though not always), and the avoidance of uncalculated risk.

I have concluded that this is not a question of left vs right but right vs wrong. Good macroeconomic policy is a prerequisite of economic progress.

That is not to say there aren't big debates about individual policies. Post-financial crisis, some countries favoured monetary easing; some didn't. Some academics have proposed fiscal expansion to restore growth; some think that is injurious to long-term financial health. There is a wide range of views about the right macro policy to produce growth, about fiscal policy, about the point at which certain policies can put stability at risk.

But what is not in contention is that losing credibility in macro policy and thus endangering stability is fatal. Consistently maintaining confidence in an economy and therefore access to credit is a precondition of success.

Ultimately, if a government looks as though it can't pay its bills, it will be in trouble, as even a highly developed nation like the UK found to its cost in September 2022 when a mini-budget that sought to fund tax cuts through increased borrowing caused consternation in the markets. The credibility of a government, its finance ministry and central bank underpin the overall credibility of every country.

OK, that may seem obvious, but it needs stating because occasionally Leaders think they can play a bit fast and loose with this credibility. They can't.

Nations should be open to investment, both internal and external. No country succeeds without it. In my experience, Leaders love it when people are investing in their country: it says something positive not just about the economy but the country itself.

So, when Leaders ask me how to attract investment—and they can be Leaders of countries with vast investment potential—I tell them the answer is simple: predictability and stability. But unfortunately, I often have to add, your country is a world away from either. You may think it isn't; and the system may tell you, the Leader, that it's geared to attracting the investment the country needs. But if you speak to your country's existing investors or those who might have an interest in investing, they will tell you the true state of affairs.

Creating a good business and investment climate is the swiftest way to attract capital: predictable rules, properly applied; contracts awarded without corruption. The challenge is that this generally involves reform of systems that have represented the precise opposite of those attributes. Changing the system requires cultural as well as regulatory changes. But there is no doubt what works. Any reasonably smart business leader or economist of international standing can tell you. The issue is whether you're listening!

Countries should be prepared to go out and showcase what they have: attach themselves to major investment conferences, hold special meetings for investors of interest. They should venture out into the world, not wait for people to turn up at their door.

They should also have a strong process in place for follow-up. Yes, *le suivi* matters here too. I often see countries getting encouraging initial interest from potential investors. Maybe the head of state personally meets them. There is real enthusiasm. But then it is passed down the ranks and disappears into the impenetrable morass of the bureaucracy. Having an investment or promotion agency or board, which focuses on identifying opportunities and how they might be accessed, is a good idea. However, such an agency will only work if it has the complete and demonstrated support of the Leader and possesses the power to act across government to shift obstacles.

Resist economic nationalism. By this I don't mean refuse to support national champions of proven excellence or discard industrial strategy. I mean don't make it hard for international companies who really can add value to your economy to enter on the fallacious grounds that you can do it on your own. Getting high-quality financial, intellectual and management capital into a country is an essential part of development.

Interesting side note: the UK's car industry only really revived after chronic decline in the 1970s when Nissan from Japan was allowed to set up its plant in the north-east. It showed the way to modern efficiency and the rest of the industry followed to significant and positive effect.

Nations that are rich in natural resources but export them unprocessed, allowing value to be added elsewhere, need to attract those investors who have a track record of value-added processing. Doing this is harder than it sounds but is possible if the country has a clear and plausible understanding of what is available and how an investor could exploit it, and is able to target investment to the individual companies that it believes will add value.

My institute has helped secure some major investments from large international firms in countries with a poor record of processing their raw

material—like cotton or other crops. These firms carry out the necessary processing or manufacturing locally, so that at least some of that substantial added value is kept in the country that produces it.

There are, however, still examples of countries that grow substantial crops but export them unprocessed to other more developed nations, with the finished product from their crop coming back as expensive imports. Crazy. And, of course, very bad for balance of payments.

For developing countries especially, I favour an industrial strategy approach. Work out a coherent plan of what you have, what its potential is, how it might relate to the other things in your economy and service the global economy. Get the best brains from wherever you can, to help formulate such a strategy. Work out, for example, how, if a major investor comes into the country, the local small-business sector can profit. Make sure that this strategy is understood across government. To attract investment you need different departments to work together and to align. Set up the right process within government to make this happen.

As with the necessity of a strong macroeconomic policy, the need for good infrastructure may seem obvious. And, of course, all countries want the best infrastructure they can get. They know that without it their economy will be stunted. The problem—given finite resources and unlimited demand—is how they get it.

One of the reasons China has been able to achieve such traction in Africa is that it has been willing to build infrastructure. The Leader wants a new bridge? A new airport? A new government building? The Chinese—government or private sector or state-owned enterprises (SOEs)—march in and get constructing. No political strings are attached. The problem is the other strings: concessions for resources or terms of debt, contracts negotiated at speed but later repented at leisure.

But it is this speed of delivery which has enabled China to expand trading links so rapidly across the developing world. And it underscores the urgent demand for infrastructure.

It requires a plan, as ever. At its heart is a project which is investable. This is where things usually break down. “Investable” means in a form in which an international reputable investor can see the scope, the feasibility and, most vital, the rate of return. It can’t just be a wish list of the president’s favourite “blue sky” ideas.

The trouble is that making a project “investable” requires expertise that governments generally lack. This is why, for all the talk, the proportion of investment going to renewable energy in the developing world as opposed to the developed world has fallen in past years. It’s not a shortage of capital. It’s a shortage of projects put in investable form.

This offers a huge opportunity for the development policies of the West if only some imagination were exercised in how to fill the lacuna.

My institute helps with this challenge in a lot of the countries we work in, but governments for their part have to cooperate, and they also have to overcome the vested interests that benefit from the existing infrastructure arrangements.

Infrastructure, of course, serves both the country itself and its international trade. Take airport links, for example. The more connected and accessible a country is, the more investment is attracted. Direct flights from Europe and the USA, and increasingly from wealthier parts of Asia, are therefore crucial. So are procedures at the airport that minimise the hassle for the visitor. Ideally, there should be a national airline, though not necessarily one run by the state.

All of this is very challenging. With the right planning, however, challenges can be met. Singapore, the UAE and Qatar have drawn on government wealth to improve their connectivity. But then so have poorer nations such as Rwanda, which is building a successful airline, and Ethiopia, which has one of the best in the world.

Ports also need to be out of government hands—where they’re often bastions of corruption—and world-class operators brought in. I know countries with masses of things to offer the world, where it can take weeks

to get goods out of a port, unless of course money changes hands, which for Western companies today is simply impossible.

Power sector planning is essential, too, particularly in our technology-driven age. In developing countries, the management of national utilities is often inefficient, and, as a result, investors looking for a return can't see one. (As a rule developing nations will receive a certain amount from the international donor community for roads, and occasionally for railways and ports, while help with power generation is available but takes a lot of time and effort to access.)

The result is that some of the poorest countries have some of the highest prices for electricity, while big companies developing commodities use their own power supply disconnected from the national grid. In the work we do in this sector around the world, there is a game plan which can be followed to ensure investment flows and generating capacity is built. But it requires a strong focus from the Leader and the willingness to take on the interests holding back necessary reform.

One island state we work with has a warm climate and plenty of sun. There is therefore unlimited potential for cheap solar and wind power. What is it using? Expensive diesel. Nuts! Thankfully it's changing. But only because the Leader decided it was time to call out the local monopoly.

Today, digital technology is vital to infrastructure—so vital that I devote a separate chapter to it (Chapter 20). Here it should simply be noted that there is no part of a country's economic strategy that should go uninfluenced by technology.

Agriculture, for example, is about to undergo its own technological revolution: new methods of irrigation and fertilisation, new seeds, new forms of cooperative ownership achieved through digitisation, new ways of accessing markets, predicting weather, even indoor growing—but all developed through advances in technology which AI is about to boost enormously.

With a large part of the world still dependent on agriculture for employment, it is crucial for a Leader to study these developments and see

how new methods can be applied. There are countries—Sierra Leone with rice, Ethiopia with wheat—which have successfully engineered limited import substitution programmes. But the possibilities today offer the opportunity of an agri-revolution for countries prepared to engage with these new ways of working.

Amid all this, don't forget the labour market. Again, there are lessons to learn from developed and developing nations.

Some poorer countries have such informal economies that it really doesn't matter in practical terms what the letter of the law is in respect of labour rights, protection in the workplace and so on. But for middle-income countries looking to move into developed-country status, these are important. Middle-income countries are also often held back by old labour practices—restrictive usually—multiple vested interests and a web of different organisations that either make the business of employing people difficult or encourage the informal economy to continue. Again, for outside investors, such practices are a deterrent.

Take Indonesia. For years and through successive presidencies, it struggled with a system where, for example, there was a ban on using foreign doctors. The country's medical association had a tight grip on recruitment. The result was that the healthcare system was left severely short of personnel and the country spent a fortune sending people—at least, wealthier people—abroad for treatment, until, finally, President Jokowi produced an Omnibus Law of Labour reform, allowing at least some foreign doctors to practise to augment local ones.

Europe is an object lesson here for middle-income countries. Our labour market laws, and pension schemes, were the product of highly centralised collective bargaining in the days of old-fashioned industry. Over time, and as the economy demanded more flexibility, these have become brakes on innovation and growth. Changing them is hard but essential. Because without a reasonable level of labour market flexibility, a country will struggle to obtain high levels of investment or growth.

This doesn't mean there shouldn't be proper protections in place—like a minimum wage, for example. But very restrictive practices around hiring and firing, while they may entail less firing, also mean less hiring.

Preparing people, educating them for a changing labour market is crucial, too. Universities today are not only centres of education, they're also business incubators. For Britain, which has some of the finest in the world, they're a vital part of UK PLC—representing a major shift in focus over the past thirty to forty years. The same is true of the USA. It's no coincidence that where there is a Stanford or a Berkeley or a UCLA, you find a plethora of successful technology companies; a similar pattern is found in Boston and, increasingly, in Texas.

The crème de la crème of students from developing countries will usually end up abroad. In the short term, this is inevitable. But even if this proves the case longer term, it is still necessary for such countries to have at least some well-functioning higher education institutions. Existing institutions seeking to upgrade themselves can sometimes benefit from a partnership with a well-established Western university. Most universities in Western countries have indeed established partnerships with those in a variety of developing countries—some of the partnerships have been facilitated by my institute.

It is worth developing countries' while to expend real effort to bring in such partners. They can accelerate development, and share expertise which then creates connections with international "best in class," in a way that a country could never achieve from a standing start.

Liberate your talented young people, particularly in the tech sector. In virtually every country in the world, there are smart young people switched on to technology who, if they're enabled, will invent applications, start small companies that can grow, disrupt traditional business models and do so with astonishing speed. I have seen this all over Africa and the Far East. There is amazing home-grown ingenuity. The role of government here is to create as much regulatory permission for such experimentation as

possible, and to minimise bureaucratic interference or rules drawn up with an old-fashioned view of the economy in mind.

Some countries have built their own facilities for helping start-up companies, specially dedicated sites and offices where young entrepreneurs with interesting innovations can be helped to turn the ideas into businesses. These are called “incubators.”

The result is that the smart young people who make use of those facilities have a chance to grow a business, employ people and create the ecosystem which can help the whole economy flourish.

Despite the frequent chaos of central administrations in many countries in Africa, and though the amount of venture capital there lags behind the rest of the world by a significant degree, that capital has nevertheless increased tenfold in the past five years. Africa is now home to around a dozen impressive unicorn companies. The trend is even more apparent in South East Asia.

It helps, too, if the country is a place people want to come to. Security. Functioning cities. These matter. So, too, do culture and art.

Finally, the government itself needs to be organised to take advantage of opportunities to make these types of economic change. Put your best people in charge. Bring in whatever outside expertise you need. It is highly unlikely that the existing bureaucracy will have the skill set you require. But there will be outsiders—maybe in your diaspora—who will sign up if called upon.

When the president of Indonesia wanted the best finance minister he could find, he turned to Mrs. Sri Indrawati, then at the World Bank. He asked her once. She said no. Twice, she said no. Third time, like the parable in the Bible, his persistence paid off. Good people are gold. Go and find them and ask until they say yes!

Economics always seems so very dry. But some of these lessons if followed will change a country's trajectory. All are difficult to put into practice, of course. But across the globe you will find countries that have managed to do so.

I have left one element out. It is so important it needs its own chapter:
the rule of law.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Rule of Law

When we consider the multiplicity of complex challenges that Leaders face, the grand and fascinating issues like the technological revolution, or how to cope with the rise of China, or the practical but essential lessons of winning or losing power, it may seem strangely prosaic to have a chapter on something that sounds as dry and niche as the “rule of law.”

That, however, would be a grave underestimation of its importance. The rule of law is something every developed nation has in common. That alone should mean it gets some attention. Because it implies that it is intrinsic to becoming developed—and it is.

Consider the countries that have made it from “Third World” status to “Second World” through to developed nations; all of them—some with a lot of struggle—finally embraced the rule of law.

What is the rule of law? It is a legal system which is not corrupt, which operates according to objective principle, where experienced legal minds sift evidence, search for truth, and decide on the basis of what they judge, genuinely, to be right. In other words, a justice system that seeks to be just.

That doesn’t mean it is flawless, or doesn’t make mistakes, occasionally miscarry justice; but it does mean it doesn’t intend to.

Now, most people would agree it is morally correct to have such a system of justice. But the important thing to emphasise is the role it plays not just in the moral rectitude of governing but in its efficacy.

The characteristic people value most in any society is stability. It might not be the first thing someone in a modern developed nation thinks of. But that is because we take it for granted. The government loses an election, it

goes. People break the law and we understand there are consequences. The system may underperform and let people down; but we know it's supposed to function properly and, if it doesn't, there will eventually be consequences. We can challenge government, express opinions, protest, stand for election in all manner of weird political groupings: essentially feel free, within accepted norms of behaviour, to do as we please.

Sure, people complain about “intrusive” government, and during Covid some even claimed we were living in a “police state” when we were told to vaccinate, but most of those people have no clue as to what living in a true police state is like.

Britain has been fortunate enough to possess the rule of law over a very long and unbroken period of time. There have been political upheavals, moments of acute national anxiety, wars, threats from terrorism and many crises, but throughout the foundational stability of the country has held firm.

The presence of the rule of law has been crucial to this happy state.

It would be hard to list all the people from abroad who say to me: we like your country because we know we can depend on your judicial system. One friend from a country where the judges routinely accept bribes told me of his pleasure and astonishment when he found that in the court case he litigated in London's commercial court—because he had wisely put UK dispute resolution in the contract—the judge seemed genuinely concerned with the facts!

Britain has made a good living from the law, as a matter of fact. Legal firms and the courts do well from the business of deciding cases fairly, because British, or more accurately English, common law is the law of choice governing the contracts.

The presence of a properly functioning legal system in any country makes the country inherently attractive. I know of international investors who say: I will only invest in a country that observes due process. You can tell them of the great opportunities in some developing nation, the potentially outsize returns they might make; but still they prefer the solidity

and dependability of a country whose legal system means that they can get a fair trial if something goes wrong.

With faith in the law, people can plan, think ahead, be ambitious, be unrestrainedly creative. Without it, they reason: let me take what I can when and wherever I can, because who knows what tomorrow brings; and if I can only be creative in so far as I am allowed by an oppressive government, why should I bother in the first place?

Or you could be a good entrepreneur, have a great idea, believe that you can build a thriving business, but if that means upsetting the existing providers in the same line of business with the power to impede you, or getting permits from a bureaucracy which is subject to corruption, it means your full-time focus is on working the system, not scaling the enterprise, and spending your energies on circumventing the obstacles, not on the quality of the product.

In all this, a robust legal framework plays a significant part. You need to know that the existing providers can't take you down through their government contacts, that government officials aren't going to be asking for a pay-off, that there isn't some hidden hand thwarting you. And if there is, that you can challenge it.

Naturally, if you're some big global company, with its own power and contacts, you can go into almost any political environment and make deals, prosper and calculate the risks reasonably cleanly. Smaller investors or local entrepreneurs, however, suffer and are held back. And the impact is much bigger than you might think. In several of the developing countries in which the Tony Blair Institute works, sectors vital to the success of a modern economy are dominated by key traditional players, who keep out innovation by using their networks of contacts to stifle competition, and who maintain a (usually very cushy) status quo.

Energy and telecoms are two obvious areas. In the era of the technology revolution, they have much more centrality than ever before. Keep out innovation there and a country's potential is chronically constrained.

I know of countries with access to large amounts of natural resources for energy, who nonetheless rely on expensive fossil fuel imports, or whose power-providers can charge exorbitant prices because they have suppressed competition.

I know of countries whose need for satellite technology to bring internet connectivity to remote areas of the nation is abundantly plain, but who persist in blocking satellite providers because local telcos fear the competition.

For the economy, then, the rule of law is not a “nice to have,” it is a critical element for future prosperity.

It’s vital for political stability, too. Because if people know there is legal recourse, against discrimination or bad behaviour by officials, then they’re more likely to seek change through persuasion than revolt. That doesn’t mean there won’t be demonstrations, marches and, if you’re French, the occasional riot; but it does mean that the silent majority, whatever their view of the particular issue in contention, do not think “the street” is the way to decide the issue.

For developing countries who want to introduce the rule of law, the challenge is where to start. As with any other reform, whole-system change is hard and indigestible.

But there are ways to begin. Take commercial contracts, for example. Several countries have now ring-fenced contract law so that—if necessary, with judges from outside the country—companies investing can be sure of respect for contract law. It is vital for that to apply to local firms as well.

One of the many lessons in governance from the accession process to joining the European Union is the insistence, as part of passing the tests for adhesion, on the adoption of due process. Countries which were part of the old Soviet system of justice, which had become both politically and financially deeply corrupted, had to change their systems radically to comply. Now, it is true that some have treated compliance somewhat indifferently, but on the whole and certainly over time, there has been a huge change in those countries’ legal systems, and for the better. The point

is, it shows it can be done provided that the incentives to do so are large enough. And it does really matter.

I worry that, today, developed nations themselves, under the pressure of populist politics, are paying insufficient attention to the importance of the rule of law and its profound role in making our countries places where people want to be.

Judges should be able to do their work without interference from politicians—and especially without interference from the Leader—even when they’re doing something the Leader—or for that matter, public opinion—dislikes. Change the legal framework within which they operate if you think that framework is seriously obstructing good government, but don’t attack the courts when they simply interpret the law in ways you as Leader find inconvenient.

Media outrage shouldn’t decide cases either. I’ll read about a case in a newspaper and think “well, that’s a weird judgment to make.” But reading about it, especially if the paper is trying to make a point, is different from hearing it, listening to all the evidence and weighing that evidence to make a reasoned judgment.

And if a corrupted justice system is the most flagrant betrayal of the rule of law, an inefficient one damages it too. It’s worth bearing in mind in this context the words of Magna Carta: “to no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or *delay* right or justice” (my italics). Delay in legal processes in many developed countries, let alone developing nations, undermines those countries and people’s faith in them. And the fact is that the legal systems of many nations are in disarray. In the UK, for example, the criminal justice system has pretty much broken down, with most crimes not even resulting in a prosecution let alone a conviction, and good cases collapsing because of the length of time it takes to bring them to trial. I think the same could be said for systems all over the Western world.

It doesn’t help that the civil justice system is prohibitively expensive for those on average incomes.

It doesn't help, either, that many systems were created for a different time. The rules were set when people's primary anxiety was a miscarriage of justice or police corruption or malfeasance. The laws the systems are implementing are frequently out of date as types of crime—for example, online fraud, drug-running, organised gangs—have changed in nature and capability.

Technology is used randomly if at all, even though its employment would enable massive efficiencies to be introduced in justice systems: in the preparation and conduct of trials; in the writing of judgments; in taking evidence; and even in civil cases in adjudication. Estonia is one nation showing the way here, using AI to settle civil claims of under 7,000 euros and demonstrating, in the process, how AI could play a significant part in helping developing countries cut out low-level legal corruption.

We should also be wary of weaponising the justice system politically. I choose my words carefully here. I am definitely not saying politicians should be above the law. On the contrary. If a politician, especially a Leader, does something criminal, they should be treated no differently from anyone else.

But it is an increasing feature of democracies that Leaders come under criminal investigation, either in office or after, which takes place in a highly charged and politicised atmosphere. Sometimes the facts are in dispute. Sometimes the facts aren't but the characterisation of them is. And this is where the trouble starts.

OK, a Leader turns out to have a Swiss bank account into which government money has been siphoned off, or they have been paid by someone seeking to secure a government contract: of course, full force of the law.

But I don't like to see high-profile cases where the facts are open to different interpretations, where the case is borderline, and where, let us say, there is a certain transparent zeal with which the case is being prosecuted.

If even a small number of reasonable people think the system is being politically used, it undermines faith in the system. Worse, it allows someone

who is genuinely criminal to mix up the justified with the unjustified and thus rally their support base in a manner poisonous to democracy. After all, if a Leader believes they're being targeted by the system in ways they think are naked politics dressed up in legal garb, they will fight to survive by attacking the system's integrity.

Then what is good for the government goose becomes good for the opposition gander when the government falls. As a result, over time, something essential to the rule of law, namely faith in the law's objectivity, becomes fatally weakened.

So, yes, apply the law to Leaders as to citizens, but there is no harm and much good in exercising judgement as to when doing so is truly necessary.

Anything that smacks of arbitrariness (and Western nations should take care in this regard with some of their actions on sanctioning individuals), or putting political power above legal process, or the diminution of objective in favour of subjective determination, should be avoided or permitted only in the most extreme of circumstances.

The rule of law is more than a set of rules fairly administered. It is a virtue, a quality which speaks to the nature of a nation. It is hallowed ground. Acquire it if you don't have it, to govern well; and if you're lucky enough to have it already, appreciate it and don't disturb it.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Plague of Ideology

When I am in South America, I occasionally reflect that the worst thing Europe ever did to the continent—after colonisation—was the export of European political ideology, particularly some of the more fundamentalist types of socialism. Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, not to mention the smaller countries, all bear the scars of the same ideological battles, and nearly all are still struggling to overcome them.

We could take some of the Middle East countries that were heavily influenced by European political thought and conclude the same: Nasser in Egypt or the Baath Party in Iraq or Syria.

This is not to say the military dictatorships also governing many of those countries were not as bad or worse; but that was less to do with ideology than a plain grabbing of power. And fascism as a functioning ideology in power thankfully died in the Second World War.

I am from the progressive wing of politics, the one that is traditionally associated with—among other things—socialism. And as a code of values, I still find socialism has great attraction. We should as a society look after the poorest first. We should as a community provide the services fundamental to human progress so that all the people, and not some, can benefit from them. Inequality of opportunity, and to a degree outcome, should be a scourge to our conscience. We should commit to those outside our borders as well as to those within them.

But socialism as a hardcore ideology—seeking to control the economy, regarding business with suspicion if not enmity, protecting the producer even at the expense of the consumer, believing that the bigger the state, the

more just the country—has no appeal for me. This version of socialism has done damage and continues to do it. And it is one of the ongoing tragedies of politics on the left that parts of the left carry on in adherence to this ideological view of socialism long after it has become clear that the chasm between the claims made for it, and the reality created by it, is unacceptably large.

In recent times, the Conservative wing of politics has developed its own ideological challenge.

Conservatives, traditionally, have had some good things going for them. They bring a perspective of realism to the process of governing. They're sceptical about utopian dreaming, because they understand it begins in excitement and ends in disappointment. They value hard work and self-improvement. While some on the left view patriotism and love of country contemptuously, Conservatives rightly regard them as positive qualities.

While I was growing up in politics, Conservatives distrusted ideology. They believed it incompatible with sound policy. They certainly stood for certain principles: free trade, social order, global engagement in defence of interests and, latterly, equality of opportunity and aspiration. They sometimes thought it necessary to take difficult or unpopular decisions to uphold these principles. True, there was something elitist about it all, but in a curiously healthy way. They thought that to govern well was an end in itself, and that bred with it a certain superiority complex. They thought that those on the left got misled into doing things which chimed with their ideology but not with objective reality. The Conservatives could be relied on to govern well because no one else would. Or at least that is how they saw things.

As a result, in Britain, the Conservative Party has been the default party of government, holding power for roughly three-quarters of the 120 years that the Labour Party has been in existence. (And even then, a third of Labour's time in office was under New Labour, about which the traditional Labour Party was somewhat conflicted.) In other words, because the Labour Party was often not a true competitor for power, the Conservative

Party took the role of being a reliable if not always likeable guardian of the interests of the realm.

Then the Conservatives became intoxicated with the giddy elixir of ideology. How this happened, and why, we can debate. But suddenly, patriotism became nationalism, love of country became rejection of institutions of global cooperation, duty to govern well became the hallmark of the dreaded elites which they no longer wanted to join but rather to pull down around them.

This is not a phenomenon confined to Britain. Around the world we see traditional parties upended by new populist parties, or see mainstream parties increasingly captured by their fringe elements. There has been a hardening of politics around the left and the right.

The two ends of the spectrum have much in common. They both use the same inflammatory rhetoric. They both indulge in populism, which delights in exploiting grievances rather than dealing with them. They both demonise particular groups as standing in the way of the future they desire. For the left it could be business. For the right it could be immigrants. They thrive on confrontation and seek it out. They both find policymaking driven by evidence, analysis, deep thinking about difficult problems as proof of what a country is up against rather than necessary to provide solutions. Looking around the world and asking what works is seen as the refuge of the impure, the early signs of betrayal of “the cause.”

The appeal is essentially to the public as victims—of the “deep state,” the “blob,” the media barons, the billionaires, the financiers, 57 varieties of the “enemy within.” Complexity is an irritant. Facts are yours or mine; not just facts.

The rejection of ideology is not the same as rejecting ideals. I know that some would define ideology as something more akin to ideals, or at least a structured set of ideals. But for me the distinguishing feature of an ideology is that it is a whole-system analysis and solution. It is intrinsically dogmatic. For example, I would argue that the creation of public healthcare systems and welfare states was the product of ideals: they’re compatible

with different views about the economy, the market, the role of private capital; and they're motivated by values of human solidarity, not by doctrine. Ideology, on the other hand, is a belief system in which the state—or it could be a religion, or an idea—is not an answer but THE answer. It is a lens through which every challenge is seen and solved.

Ideals are more like principles—universal and non-exclusionary.

Anyone in politics should have some idealism in them. Even just a desire to run a country well counts as an ideal. Contrary to what most electorates think most of the time, the majority of people in politics go into it to try to do good. Naturally they don't always succeed. But that's another matter. Being motivated by principle, by strong values, a sense of purpose—these are great qualities. And necessary for the political game if it is to be played well.

Ideals are a live hand, measuring achievement by what is achieved. Ideology is a dead hand, measuring achievement by obedience to doctrine and dogma. Ideology is not even a governing political philosophy. It is unfortunately too rigid for that. It is a conviction that only a certain way or a certain set of policies or a certain set of fixed attitudes have validity and should prevail.

The appeal of ideology is that it promises to effect not just any change but “radical” change. And at a time of deep frustration with conventional systems and their outcomes, this appeal runs out of the fringes and into mainstream politics.

For the ideologue, being “radical” is paramount even if at odds with being “practical.” People who are “practical” are considered at best technocratic, and at worst humdrum or even boring. No one ever captivated a street demonstration with a placard reading “Be practical.”

But practical and radical should not be alternatives, in competition with each other. They should be complementary. Radical in the context of governing means fundamental change. Systemic change. Change that alters the rules of the game. But if it's not practical, it won't work.

Big problems require big solutions. But the emphasis should be on the word “solution” as much as on the word “big.”

As I discuss later, harnessing the twenty-first-century technological revolution should be the goal of government today and one that is both radical in nature and practical in effect. In time, it will eclipse the twentieth-century ideological battle between state and market, capital and labour, and at least alter the background against which debates over globalism or nationalism are conducted.

When I think of the countries doing well today, they have done so by sound analysis, careful evaluation of the evidence, painstaking construction of policy and then have made change which is far-reaching based on what the evidence tells them will yield the desired consequence.

China’s former leader Deng Xiaoping is a fascinating study on many levels. More than anyone else, he was responsible for opening his country up and creating the conditions for its extraordinary economic progress. He did so in the aftermath of the brutal ideological nightmare of the Cultural Revolution, in which a version of Maoist ideology gripped the country with disastrous effects. Deng himself was arrested, exiled, his family persecuted, yet somehow he re-emerged to lead what became increasingly a frontal assault on the very notion that ideology could or should distort an objective assessment of reality.

The words he used to persuade the Chinese Communist Party to change course so dramatically still resonate today.

Contrary to the CCP doctrine (and actually much of Chinese history), he asserted that China had to learn from others, in particular the West, from Western education to Western science and technology. He described the process of policy reformulation as “seeking truth from facts” and “proceeding from reality.” To do that, he argued, people had to “emancipate” their minds.

Rather than vain boasts about how wonderful things were in China, he emphasised instead China’s relative poverty and backwardness.

It was a remarkable and transformative message.

And he followed it up in what he called “integrating theory with practice,” delivering fundamental reforms and changes to China’s economy and system that set the country on a path to future prosperity and power.

His life, prior to being Leader, was a testament to the damage ideology can do. His leadership once he assumed power was a testament to what an enlightened Leader, free from the constraints of ideology, can achieve.

A Leader, even if they have come to office with support that is ideological in nature, would do well when in power to govern according to what works, what will produce change that is real, not fit the policy to the ideology but—even if quietly—discard the ideology in favour of the answer. The practical answer.

Stimulate and stir the emotions of the people of course—that is part of political leadership. But if you want to succeed, be that radical with the head and heart in healthy combination.

PART IV

Keeping Up with a Changing World: The Twenty-first-Century Technological Revolution

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

The Technology Revolution and the Reimagined State

We are living through a twenty-first-century technological revolution that is transforming the way we work, live, interact with each other and engage with the world around us, and it is doing so in as powerful and all-encompassing a way as the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution transformed the world of an earlier generation—possibly more so.

Yet it has not so far transformed politics. It should. And with it, it should bring about a reimagining of the state itself.

A few years back, when I first started making this claim to fellow politicians, some would nod, but most would put the statement down to typical political hyperbole. Or they would think I had been out of office for too long, that I was forgetting how “ordinary” people lived their lives, forgetting the cost of living crisis, the pressures of everyday existence—things that at one level, of course, seem a world away from computer chips and scientific discovery.

“It all sounds very technocratic,” they would say. The word is not meant as a compliment in politics.

The sniffiness among political people towards anything which might be deemed “technocratic” or “technical” has always intrigued me. I first came across it when I was undertaking root and branch reform of the healthcare system in the UK, and colleagues—even those generally sympathetic—would say, “Yes, but what about the values of the British NHS, its fairness, its free-at-the-point-of-use clarity? Surely those are the key things?”

As if “values” and the technical means of achieving them were somehow in separate boxes!

The technical is the means of implementing the values. The better the technique the faster the progress.

Of course, the language in which the purpose of the reform is expressed should avoid technocratic terms, but without the technical part being correct, the reform will never succeed.

The word “technology” is a derivative of two Greek words: *techne*, meaning skill or craft, and *logos*, meaning word, and also thought (as in St. John’s gospel—“In the beginning was the word”). The point is the word “technology” assumes there is a purpose to which the skill is being put.

Likewise, the word “technocratic” basically means people with specialist knowledge who can use that knowledge to solve practical problems; i.e., technocrats make things work.

This twenty-first-century technological revolution implies a fundamental change in the means to the end. Which is not to say the means is the end. The purpose of political activity and of government, done properly, has not changed. It was and is to advance the interests of the people and to implement the values underpinning that purpose.

But in this case, the nature of the change in “means” is so great that it enlarges the ambition of the end and the speed at which it can be attained. It is a revolution that offers the opportunity to solve problems to which there are presently no solutions.

The task of the Leader is first to accept the magnitude of this “real world” change, then to explain it, and finally to weave it into an exciting and enthusing political narrative.

The reality facing every developed nation is that the services the citizen expects can’t keep up with the pace of demand. Healthcare systems are teetering on the brink; criminal justice systems are dysfunctional; planning consents slowing down or impeding essential changes in infrastructure, particularly in green energy; backlogs, breakdowns and bureaucracy abound.

The old answer was spend more, tax more.

But today, we're at the limit of public acceptance of tax and spend as the answer. Expectations haven't changed. The pressure for government to deliver is as great as ever. But the capability of doing so, with the state in its present form, has eroded.

The new answer lies in embracing fully the potential of technology to transform.

In the developing world, where the challenges are multiple, complicated and often seemingly intractable, and where finances are inevitably constrained, this technological revolution is the "leapfrog" idea, the thing which can allow a nation—and within a reasonably short space of time—to bypass the normal stages of development and accelerate rapidly to the future.

And it offers global solutions as well. There is no politically realistic answer to the challenge of climate change other than through the invention of technology which permits sustainable economic growth. Otherwise, in the developed world, consumers will rebel against the costs of action; and the developing world will put development action above climate action, because, after all, they didn't create the problem and they need their countries to grow.

So, the twenty-first-century technological revolution isn't AN issue, it is THE issue of our times. It should DOMINATE the political debate, not be an interesting sidebar to the "first order" daily living issues.

Twentieth-century political economy was dominated by debates around capitalism/the primacy of markets vs socialism/the size of the state—the traditional division between left and right.

For some years now, these debates have abated in significance even as they have intensified in fury. So, we argue about marginal changes to tax and spending and ascribe vast ideological difference to them.

Alongside them have come new "culture" debates—nationalism, "wokeness," identity—partly in replacement of traditional economic debates, where the extremes of positions overwhelm the public discourse,

even though most people take a reasonable and more nuanced, moderate view of all of them.

Debating how we apply technology to solve our problems, in ways that don't threaten our liberties, is a less high-octane, emotionally thrilling ride than debating whether our opponents are good or bad people, but is ultimately far more fulfilling of our interests and happiness. However, it requires political Leaders to embrace this agenda and develop the narrative which provides the "thrill" and the enthusiasm.

Generative AI has, to a degree at least, changed the political mood around technology. Some Leaders will, for example, use ChatGPT. Even so, for most it remains a kind of toy. They don't yet think about how it can change entirely their political programme, as we shall see in the next chapter. Or they focus on the dangers of it, and talk obsessively of regulation—a conversation which comes naturally to the political class.

None of this is surprising. Back in the throes of the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution, politics took ages to catch up with what was happening in the real world. Exciting new inventions were being made all the time; the development of urban centres and the reduction of countryside employment were proceeding apace. The economy of the UK as the epicentre of this revolution was being transformed.

But the political class, as a reading of the parliamentary debates of the time reveals, was still locked in the world of the previous age, dominated by wealthy Tory and Whig landowners. And much of the debate was around the "evils" of this industrialisation.

It took decades before such people realised that the new industrial world they were witnessing was THE issue and before legislation recognising its existence started to be passed.

It took even longer for the political party system to adjust to it. The UK may have been the furnace of the Industrial Revolution, but it was not until the early twentieth century that the British Labour Party was formed. It was not until the 1920s that it assumed power for the first time. It was even

longer again before the British state itself was the object of the revolution and the modern welfare state was created.

In all, the process of change and adaptation took a hundred years.

Today's world moves much faster. But even so, it will take time for most to catch up. Eventually, political Leaders will begin to realise the enormous potential of such a new narrative and, in government, understand the capacity the technological revolution can bring to delivery and therefore to political success.

It will not necessarily be the countries we expect that start the process. Who would have thought that the government of Estonia would be the most technologically progressive in the European Union, or that Kenya would lead the way in smart processing of financial payments, or that Senegal would produce the best Covid-19 vaccination pass, or that Indonesia would come up with the most advanced mobile delivery service?

One key change this revolution will initiate is a fresh understanding of the centrality of education to economic achievement. In this new world, the university sector becomes a vital economic engine. No country hoping to succeed in the twenty-first century can be without world-class universities. Out of higher education will come innovation. And once a digital infrastructure is in place, local talent can invent new applications. A whole new ecosystem of enterprise arises that can, if properly utilised, change both the local economy and government.

Traditional political parties formed along those traditional left/right economic fault lines will—indeed in many places have already started to—disintegrate and regroup around those conservative and hesitant about the application of technology vs those who see it as a future which should be embraced.

At this point people often go: “Stop! This revolution is terrifying!”

However, if there's another lesson to be learnt from the Industrial Revolution in particular, and history in general, it's that such things, once invented by human ingenuity, are never disinvented by human anxiety. The

machine-breaking Luddites of the early nineteenth century tried to hold back the tide of change. They failed.

The answer, therefore, is not to resist or deny the revolution, but to understand it fully, to access its opportunities and mitigate its risks. Don't let fear or the inevitable campaigns against this revolution create hesitation. Let the sense of the opportunities energise the spirit of change.

Nothing makes me wish I was back in government more than the potential of this revolution. It's a great time to be governing.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Hold the Press! Something Big and Breaking Is Going On

The unique scale of this technological revolution has one other attribute. It is evolving continually. And accelerating. So, what was impossible a month ago becomes possible. What seemed sci-fi is suddenly here and now. Today we're in the world of generative AI.

I say this as someone who understands the importance of the revolution, even if I don't fully understand the technology itself. And in using the word "fully" I am being generous to myself. There are huge gaps in my understanding of technology.

When asked some time back to give a speech at a cryptocurrency symposium, I first spoke with my son, who works in the tech sector, and asked for a briefing on the subject. He tried explaining it all to me. Complete incomprehension. He sent me something called "The Idiot's Guide to Crypto." Reading it proved that there is a stage of stupidity beyond idiocy, and that I appeared to have attained it.

Finally, on the morning, having read up what I could, I called him and went through what I had learnt up to that point. "What should I tell them, then?" I asked. "Tell them you're sick," he said.

But even though I don't understand fully how new technology does what it does, I know enough to know that what it does constitutes a revolution and not an incremental step.

The twenty-first-century technological revolution was already the game-changer for politics and had been for several years. But the very

recent breakthroughs in artificial intelligence merit their own description as a revolution.

Just when you thought the pace of change could not get faster or more furious—with ever more complex geopolitics, Covid and its aftermath, accelerating climate change, wars in Europe and the Middle East—something is happening that is setting in train a further radical, technological transformation which will impact the real world massively, including all those geopolitical flashpoints.

Within an extraordinarily short space of time, certainly for the world of government and politics, generative AI will revolutionise our societies and economies.

I have always believed that there are essentially two sorts of brain: the emotional one which, if well developed, creates great art and culture and can, in politics, lead to success because it enables an understanding of the human factor in everything; and the scientific one, the one comfortable with maths and physics and chemistry, which can lead to great discoveries and game-changing scientific invention.

Quite early in life I worked out that, unfortunately, though desiring the second, I had instead been given the first. It's better than having neither, I suppose. But it has nonetheless been a continual source of disappointment to me. I was average at maths, poor at chemistry, and truly diabolically bad at physics—so bad that when I failed one particular exam my physics teacher told me with some awe that it was the worst paper he had ever encountered.

That awareness of my strength in one area and weakness in another is one of the many reasons I have always been against selecting children for overall academic prowess and splitting them between different schools accordingly—the old UK grammar/secondary system. The fact is that I was good at some things and utterly useless at others. I could grasp feelings—love, hate, respect, grief, anxiety, joy. I could see, touch and appreciate the physical world. But the world of concepts, of electrons, neurons, radio waves, gravity, conduction, electrical current—it all seemed like a closed

book which I was virtually phobic about. I felt unable and, after a time, unwilling to prise it open.

Until recently, I didn't think that mattered, either for me or for the vast majority of politicians I know with "emotional" rather than "scientific" brains. I felt that it was good enough just to know what technology does. I don't know how a mobile phone works but I know how to use one. I don't know how a plane works—except very vaguely—but it doesn't stop me flying.

So why, with generative AI, do I feel the absolute necessity of understanding at least the basics of how and why this new breakthrough came about? Because I think that for a Leader to know even a bit about how it works will lead to a deeper realisation of why it matters so much. This, in turn, will bring clarity and, most importantly, urgency to the task of embracing the opportunities of this revolution and guarding against its dangers. Because both are HUGE.

So here, from the vantage point of an unscientific mind, is what I think has happened. Needless to say, I write—ignoring the risks of gross oversimplification—as a Leader and not as a tech expert might express things.

Over the past decade, a series of technological breakthroughs have created a reinforcement loop of self-sustaining momentum, a state of permanent technological revolution, in which different technologies merge and propel each other forward, resulting in a dramatic acceleration of innovation. These breakthroughs have their roots in inventions going back many decades. But they have finally come to an outstanding development in generative artificial intelligence which has profound implications.

We start with the computer, at first simply a machine capable of doing mathematical calculations via the data stored on things as simple as punch cards. Over time, that data became electronically stored. Originally computers were analogue—that is, they simply took signals (for example, sound waves) and mimicked them electronically, hence the name analogue (i.e., analogous). Then came digitisation—the capability to take analogue

signals or data and encode them into digital signals, with everything broken down into two digits (0 and 1), according to the system of digital logic invented by George Boole in 1847. Signals transmitted by electrical current in this way have vastly enlarged capacity, are free from interference, and can be made more flexible. In other words, a digital circuit effectively involves a process which, manipulated or modulated, has far greater power than its analogue equivalent.

At first digital computers were vastly complicated electromechanical machines the size of a large room. But in the late 1940s and early 50s the first purely electronic circuits came along. Called transistors, they transfer the resistance necessary for the current to be regulated from one end of the device to the other. Transistors offer huge advantages over the bulky vacuum tubes that came before in that they are small and require relatively little power, and more of them can be stacked in a smaller space making for more effective transmission.

In 1959 came the first “integrated circuit”: a number of transistors placed on one small strip of material, or “chip.” The chip had to be made of a material that could transmit and regulate the current. This was the semiconductor material germanium soon displaced by the more efficient silicon.

With me so far?

It is no coincidence that many of those involved in the invention of the semiconductor chip worked at Bell Labs, the research offshoot of the Bell Telephone Company (named after the inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell), later the American Telegraph & Telephone Company. Telephones operated traditionally through wires connecting the power source to the instrument. But it wasn’t long before researchers at Bell were experimenting with the use of electromagnetic fields and radio frequencies to transfer the power without wires. And integrated circuits or chips were the key to such experimentation.

At first, these wireless phones could be used only over restricted distances, serviced by a single transmitter tower, and they were very

expensive. Then—once more thanks to inventions in Bell Labs—came first a network of wireless towers organised in what they called a “cellular” form; and, after that, a “switching system” that allowed a user to switch between different cells—hence the cellular network and, of course, the “cell” phone.

The first cell phone was launched in 1973 by Motorola’s Martin Cooper. It marked the commercial coming together of two technologies: the transistor or semiconductor chip that allowed the phone to function without wires—to receive power, amplify the voice, connect to the frequency reliably—and the cellular phone.

The following years were a period of miniaturisation, as developers focused on ways to fit ever more data and processing power onto chips. In 1965 Gordon Moore, at that time director of research and development at Fairchild Semiconductor, predicted that the number of transistors capable of being placed on a chip would double every two years. Moore’s Law, as it became known, turned out—unlike most political predictions—to be true. Today, it’s possible to place billions of transistors on a single, small chip.

As smaller and more powerful transistors were being produced, another major breakthrough was made. At first computers could not connect with each other, or if they did, could do so on a very restricted basis—essentially, science lab talking to science lab.

But then a British scientist, Donald Davies, invented the concept of data blocks or “packets” being shared between computers. He did this through working out how to break data into discrete streams—packets—which could be transmitted between remote computers and then reassembled into the original form. This allowed computers to operate with much greater throughput of data and introduced a system of interconnected networks of computing, sharing such packets.

At the end of the 1980s, a British engineer, Tim Berners-Lee, working at the CERN facility in Switzerland, proposed a worldwide web, a system of universal linked networks inter-networking (hence the “internet”), accessible from any node on the network.

Other inventions proliferated: wave division multiplexing and fibre-optic cable radically increased the capacity of the system, allowing virtually instant communication and therefore email; mobile phones became connected to the internet, enabling an ever closer relationship between mobile and computer, as exemplified by the iPhone; Google invented its search engine, revolutionising browsing; the semiconductor chip gave rise to the Central Processing Unit, which effectively runs the memory system of the computer; and then the General Processing Unit (used in, among other things, video games), which allows the storing of images and videos.

Amid all this, the amount of data exploded: information, messages, social networks, images. It's extraordinary to think that 99 per cent of recorded human data has been gathered in the last decade. And it's thanks to this accumulation of data that analysis via algorithms—named after the Persian mathematician of the ninth century al-Khwarizmi—has become so powerful.

Algorithms are mathematical instructions that allow a step-by-step process of calculating and therefore analysing. The more data they have to call on, the better their performance. And as they grow in power, they can make ever better connections, spot patterns, reveal as well as record. They can predict what you might like, what you might buy, what interests you. Online shopping, Netflix and Disney, predictive text messaging, all work through algorithms.

They create a kind of rudimentary artificial intelligence.

And this is where the second modern technological revolution began. Until very recently, AI was just a very good conventional algorithm. You asked a question of the internet and it responded. The process was essentially reactive.

But the data kept growing. Moore's Law kept operating. Computers and mobiles were now completely interoperable. The things they could do kept proliferating.

Then came "cloud" computing. Once, everyone stored their data on their own servers. As the big tech companies grew—Microsoft, Amazon

and others—they built such huge servers that they were left with vast amounts of unused space. They started to hire it out, using their data centres as places people could store their data without having to run their own servers with all the hassle of managing them, while simultaneously having access to much more computing power and better apps. Then other providers thought: hmm, there is a business in data centres. And so there was.

Don't ask why it's called "cloud" computing. There is a reason but frankly it's not worth the effort of explanation. And it's confusing. One political Leader I spoke to a couple of years back said, when I pressed on him the necessity of putting his government data on the cloud: "It wouldn't work here. The sun shines all year round."

For years scientists and technologists had tried to replicate in artificial form the neural network of the human brain, the real AI. They hadn't got very far. Indeed, after a splurge of activity and funding in the latter part of the twentieth century, AI rather went out of fashion.

But then the explosion of data, and the vastly improved algorithms to analyse it, led to a resurgence of interest. The twenty-first-century AI equivalents of the Bell Labs pioneers of the twentieth century built new algorithms designed like the neural networks of the human brain and used them on what are called large language models (LLMs)—models that are huge (large) software systems, run on massive computing power, that can be trained to Hoover up all the words (language) on the internet and, through AI, process them, detect patterns, make connections, answer questions asked of them, and give the appearance of thinking like a human.

Finally, like a child—which as a baby can't speak but is learning all the time the patterns of sound which eventually will lead it to speak—something changed. The machine moved beyond baby AI. And in 2022 the breakthrough occurred.

The machine could TALK!

It could propose. And therefore not just predict or describe but generate. Or, at least, it could do something close to a human mental

process (though, of course, also open to “hallucinations”).

What this means for us now is not just that processes can be automated with increasing accuracy and scope, but that AI can suggest new ways of performing them. At a certain point with Moore’s Law, transistor miniaturisation reaches a physical limit. But with AI, a new chip can be invented that makes better use of existing transistor capacity, and so bypasses the limitations of Moore’s Law. So, we now have the first AI supercomputer chip.

What does that do? It makes LLMs even better, able to do even more, creating in their wake even more data, which enables even better LLMs. In other words, it helps create a reinforcement loop of permanent revolution in innovation. Analogous to Moore’s Law, this new AI—which we call generative AI because it has the ability to generate original content and thought—will exponentially increase in capability at a self-sustaining rate.

It has all human experience. It has human brain-like capabilities—BUT one with an ever-improving intellect. It can mimic both human experience and the human brain.

True, at present, it resembles a person with an average IQ of around 100—though a person who has also absorbed the experience of all 300,000 years or so of human existence. But as the reinforcement loop gathers momentum AI will soon have an IQ of 150—that’s very smart. In time, it will have one of 200. And then we’re in a new world.

Less remarked upon is the impact generative AI is having and will have on robotics. This could well usher in its own revolution, as if we weren’t busy enough! Self-driving cars and drones are a reality already. Robots are performing essential manufacturing jobs now. There are even some taking orders in restaurants. But as the LLMs grow in power and sophistication, so the robots will grow in capacity and function. If there will be little limit on what GenAI can tell you or work out for you, so the robots will be able to perform complicated tasks—and as well as or better than humans.

Imagine robots that can cook, do your shopping, clean the house, plan your day or holiday, mow the lawn, even be a carer. They can perform

elements of these tasks already. But imagine much more developed systems, which can not only respond to human instructions, but improve them, make them more effective, suggest as well as obey. The advent of the humanoid robot is here—still at an early stage, but over time, possibly a short time, this technology will accelerate. There are even those working on how we replicate human biology, so a humanoid robot really does resemble an actual human.

Think of a world in which robots can make up workplace and skill shortages, transforming productivity, indeed eliminating it as a challenge.

Before anyone points out the obvious, let me acknowledge it. Yes, there are mind-boggling risks in all this. AI is general purpose technology. It can be used for ill as well as good. It will require regulation of a revolutionary and deep nature. The fact remains, though, that just as the technological revolution I described in the previous chapter cannot be disinvented, neither can generative AI.

There is always with something so new a risk of hype and overstatement. But I think the better judgement is that it isn't another step on the same path, even a large one. It's a revolution all in and of itself. It will change everything. The future will now be different.

We don't know exactly what form AI will now take. Or what its next iterations will do. But we do know that it is life-altering. It won't necessarily replace all human activity. It may be more like a really able co-worker. But it will certainly affect every human task, every business. Every process the human brain can perform, AI will be able to do, faster and better. It will make possible major developments in science and technology in every field from medicine to fighting climate change. And, yes, it will give bad actors, already using cyber attacks to cause enormous harm, access to weapons of far greater potency and deadliness.

At an individual level, it means we all have to go back to school. And that includes Leaders.

At government level, it means not just a step change in understanding, but a preparedness to master and harness what AI can do.

Get that and you can succeed. Ignore it or underestimate it and you will fail.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Applying Tech: A Reimagined State in Action

OK, so we're all agreed: we're in a new world. There are amazing opportunities. There are also frightening risks. How, then, do you make the most of the first and mitigate the second?

A Leader should begin by accepting one reality. Unless you're the president of the USA or China or possibly the Leader of a country with expertise in AI like the UK, or a body with weight like the EU, or "on the way up" like India, your ability to affect how computer technology in general, and AI technology in particular, develops, is somewhere between limited and non-existent.

So, there is literally no point in agonising over whether this twenty-first-century technological revolution is good or bad; whether and to what extent regulation is needed (though it definitely is); or whether it is right that the huge tech companies have the power they do. By all means take part in international conferences and conversations to discuss views on all this, and how best to manage things. But accept that, ultimately, you are not going to decide the contours of this technological revolution. However, you do get to decide whether you make the most of it.

Focus your leadership on that. Because the fact is, just as those nations that took their cue from Britain and industrialised nations in the nineteenth century thereby revolutionised their prospects, so those countries that fully harness new technology—and particularly AI—will undergo huge transformation. Think Japan in the late nineteenth century, which embraced the Industrial Revolution. Compare it with China, which didn't.

The crucial point about these revolutions—nineteenth-century industrial, twenty-first-century technological—is that we call them revolutions because after a revolution nothing remains the same. It may, at times, be incrementally implemented, but it is not, in the end, an adjustment of a system but a radical alteration of the basic principles underpinning it.

This is what you as a Leader should recognise. And adapt your mindset accordingly.

There are many things that affect a nation which are outside its control: the state of the world economy, disruption of supplies because of regional conflict, rising dollar or oil prices. All these have a direct impact on the living standards of a country's citizens. The best a Leader can do is to mitigate the impact, not remove it.

The technology revolution, by contrast, offers the chance to do things that have a real impact in a reasonably short space of time—within an election cycle—and that are within a government's control, at least if they can get the right partners to assist.

Imagine something utterly simple and prosaic: choosing a restaurant to eat in. Suppose every meal you had ever eaten, your opinion of each, the interplay between quality and cost, and the complete, not partial, knowledge of every restaurant now available to you within a defined radius, could all be assembled and analysed, you would for sure get a better answer to that choice than by trying to remember all that information, plus googling the local fare. And quickly too.

Now transfer that process to something much more significant: a surgeon performing an operation and calling not only on his or her own experience and knowledge, but the accumulated knowledge of all those who had ever performed the same operation. The outcome would be much better, wouldn't it? And then suppose that a machine—a robot—created through the same processes could do some of the trickier parts of that operation for the surgeon. That would be better, too, surely?

Think of clinical research and drug development, which generally takes years and costs vast sums, but which, thanks to new technologies, could be

successfully trialled and brought to market at almost infinitely greater scale and speed, with goal shots multiplied a hundredfold. The pharmaceutical industry would, of course, be disrupted but in a wholly beneficial way.

AI is the only realistic answer to improve productivity in the private sector.

It will also create the possibility of transformative public sector change—reform on a scale never contemplatable before. It will allow the reimagining not just of the way a service is organised but of its essential purpose.

In Britain, at present, the purpose of the National Health Service is to cure the sick. But is that function actually the correct one? Properly thought through, the aim of any healthcare system should not be to cure the sick so much as to help people live healthy lives for as long as possible. Yes, that includes curing them if they do fall sick. But a health service's fundamental purpose should be to stop them becoming ill in the first place.

What is involved in fulfilling that purpose? It's things like identifying at birth or even pre-birth an individual's predisposition to certain diseases and conditions; making sure that young people are taught how to live healthily and are informed about the importance of diet and sport; ensuring that nutritional food is easily available and unhealthy food is not; sequencing everyone's genome; introducing regular health checks, either by the doctor or, increasingly, by the individual, and the data reported to the medics; giving people easy access to their own medical records so that they can share them as necessary; using data to improve procurement and develop new drugs and treatments at speed. And this is just for starters.

At present most education systems are there to get students through exams. But is that purpose the correct one? Exams certainly have their place: passing them involves commitment and discipline—both important qualities. But surely the true goal of education should be to equip students for life, so that they can get the job they want, know how to live well and be happy, well-adjusted people? If that is acknowledged, then—bearing in mind everyone is different—the current educational cookie-cutter approach

is the wrong one. We need to take advantage of technology to enable pupils to learn at different speeds, absorb the knowledge that most suits their individual interests and abilities, and, above all, to think creatively in a fast-changing world.

Think of creating an AI doctor, which can assist a physical doctor, or which can help a person access the highest quality medical advice instantaneously; or an AI nurse working alongside a real one.

Or an AI tutor, which anyone at any stage of learning can use as a personal teacher on any subject. And do so interactively, as if talking to a real teacher who happens to have all the knowledge of humanity at their disposal.

Take the criminal justice system. Its purpose should not be the narrow one of punishing criminals but the broader one of keeping us safe. Of course, punishing criminals forms part of that purpose (and it should be done effectively and promptly, which by and large it isn't today) but it shouldn't define the whole of it. Once we focus on a system that will keep us safe we engage properly with schemes to design out crimes like online fraud, to deter violence and street crime, to make sure we use data, DNA; modern techniques of surveillance and scheduling to make policing effective, to make courts functional and show citizens that they're well protected and that, if that protection fails, they will have proper redress.

My institute keeps a running list of practical applications of new technology by governments across the globe; and it is growing all the time. Here are a few examples from developing nations:

- Drones and sensors are being used to map agricultural production, predict weather and check if stocks of grain and fertiliser provided by government are being properly utilised.
- The same tech is being applied to a deep analysis of mineral deposits, allowing many countries for the first time to assess the true nature and extent of the natural resources they possess.

- Tech is being brought to bear on water irrigation and seed enhancement to improve yield and transform the current situation whereby often an African nation will lag four- to fivefold behind what other developing (let alone developed) countries do.
- Telemedicine is making medical consultations and care possible in remote areas where a full medical presence is not practical, and generative AI will help put the doctor's notes in the right form and suggest treatments.
- Off-grid and mini-grid electricity is bringing power to remote or sparsely populated outlying regions and islands and, combined with satellite technology, is also giving them transformative internet connectivity.
- Cheap mobiles and tablets are being developed for those in the poorest parts of the world who find smartphones too expensive.
- Extensive tech facilities are being developed in Africa to help translate some of Africa's 2,000 local languages and so enable better communications.
- Welfare and subsidy payments are being made directly to the citizen or farmer, cutting down the risk of corruption.
- Personalised tutoring is now a realistic possibility open to everyone, thanks to companies like CK-12 Foundation and Khan Academy, a not-for-profit organisation that provides lessons online to millions, so using technology to bring top-quality teaching to under-served schools.
- Borders are being tracked to help eradicate smuggling, make sure fuel and tobacco taxes are paid, and eliminate "ghost" employees from the public sector payroll.
- A new range of vaccines and injectables is being developed for such communicable diseases as TB and HIV/AIDS and non-communicable diseases like heart conditions and cancer. With the right digital infrastructure in place, and proper health records—

things which are freely available now—the health of a nation can be radically improved.

But most of these innovations happened before generative AI was fully developed. All of them and many more new inventions and innovations will be available through generative AI and probably on a scale we can, as yet, barely imagine.

The toughest thing for Leaders regarding this all-encompassing revolution is getting their heads around the enormity of the possibilities. It *is* a revolution. It *is* a fact. And it's up to each Leader to decide what use to make of it. And in a political environment fraught with problems and a seeming impotence to make conventional policy change, it offers a one-off opportunity to move the needle, and in a way that is not marginal but mould-breaking.

Not everything will happen at once. But over time, the nature of the state—what it does, how it does it, its relationship with its citizens—will change. Best practices from around the world will be available to copy.

It is truly exciting, but it won't happen without Leaders who have the self-discipline to get an understanding of this revolution and have the courage to make the changes consequent upon it.

But if they do, the rewards will be great for the nation and the Leader.

CHAPTER TWENTY

Building the Infrastructure

A reimagined state means a new creation, not just a revamping of the old state.

Think of it like your country starting an airline. You supply the airport, the logistics, the roads to and from the airport; the passenger services; and related industries in tourism and business.

But you would never dream of trying to build the planes yourself. Instead, you would buy them from Boeing or Airbus, or maybe Embraer or one of the other smaller but still large manufacturers. After all, those plane manufacturers have invested countless billions, have long experience, have teams of highly skilled operatives. In other words, they have attained a level of expertise, competence and safety that no country starting from scratch is going to be able to match.

It is the same with the digital infrastructure for a nation. Countries need to harness the technological revolution effectively, with, for example, national data management systems, where the entire data of the country is stored securely and is available for analysis. But to do so they need to partner with an expert in the field, which might be one of the smaller players around, but is most likely to be one of the giants: Amazon, Microsoft, Google or Oracle; and, in China, Alibaba or Tencent. The choice of partner must be made carefully; and, of course, countries may decide—and probably, if large, should decide—to have more than one.

There is a justifiable anxiety about the domination of this market by big companies, as indeed is the case with mobile devices like smartphones. It is always possible that new players or new technologies will emerge, which

make this domination redundant. But their size is worth dwelling on for a moment.

Apple has a market capitalisation as large as the annual GDP of France. Amazon in 2024 will spend four times as much on research and development as the entire R&D budget of the British government. Oracle has invested billions in making its cloud system secure. Microsoft invested \$10 billion, a sum larger than the R&D budget of any European country apart from Germany's, in ChatGPT, the generative AI company. And that despite the fact they had absolutely no guarantee it would work. When Google bought DeepMind, the UK AI company and a world leader in the field, they then poured billions of dollars into helping it grow. No UK government could ever have diverted that level of investment into the company, vital though it is for Britain's future.

Now, you may dispute that it's good that these companies have such levels of cash to spend. You may feel there should be better ways to hold their extraordinary power to account. But the fact remains that they're able to make investments that ensure their products are vastly superior to anything anyone else can produce.

Generative AI has now added yet another dimension to the infrastructure. The foundation models for generative AI—the large language models—will also be likely dominated by another handful of companies: OpenAI, Elon Musk's Grok, Gemini from Google, Meta's offering, though there are some smaller companies, like the French company Mistral, rapidly expanding with funding readily available. But again, the investment into these companies has been massive.

The computer capacity necessary to run these LLMs is vast, beyond the reach of most countries. So there will be a case for forming a partnership with one or more of the providers, to access the technology, though even then a country will have to provide the electricity necessary to power the model.

A country should be able to add its own data to the foundational model and create a bespoke LLM, by which the opportunities to innovate and

improve efficiency on the back of it will be enhanced.

The investment for a country to build its own foundational LLM will be huge, though some like the UAE are doing so. But the cost of adapting an existing model and adding a country's own proprietary data is much less. I expect most countries and most large companies—also with their own data—will undertake such adaptations.

Digital ID will become an essential part of this digital infrastructure. Governments from Singapore and the Gulf States to India and Eastern Europe are using digital ID to transform the relationship between individuals and the state—a single biometric identifier that enables each citizen to access government services directly. At a stroke, bureaucracy—and therefore, in many countries, corruption—is cut out. Digital ID can allow people to access private sector services as well, paying for them directly and digitally.

Digital ID raises not only the challenge of changing existing legacy systems, but also the need to address people's fears about confidentiality and potential invasion of privacy.

To my mind such fears are generally misguided. Your average person gives more information to Facebook, TikTok, online shopping and entertainment than they would ever need to give government. And where, in an autocratic system, the government might abuse data privacy, frankly they're likely to do that anyway.

However, any sensible government will want to put systems in place which have proper oversight of digitisation, which enshrine citizen protections in law, and which give redress in the case of breaches.

Countries will want to protect data sovereignty. Leaders should interrogate the best way to do this. There is a common misconception that their data is safe, provided they host it in country. Unfortunately, that is incorrect. In some countries the electrical supply is insufficiently reliable, so backup systems are required. Cloud systems should be more secure, particularly if combined with in-country data centres.

Before embarking on a plan for the digital infrastructure, a Leader would be well advised to undertake a proper analysis of what digital capability already exists—and by “proper,” I don’t mean one undertaken by the system.

The system may well tell you that it’s in control of the situation, that it’s building the infrastructure and systems required, that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Ministry knows what it’s doing. It may sincerely believe this, by the way, but it will invariably turn out to be bull. On closer inspection you will discover that the infrastructure and systems are inadequate, the ICT Ministry is hopelessly underskilled, a myriad of local interests are getting in the way, and that any data centres you were hoping for are either poorly operated in the cloud or not there at all.

This is where the choice of partner really matters.

And where you’re partnering with one of the big companies, demand, as part of the deal, that the company you choose comes with a skills and training offer, and use that to build a proper academy of digital education.

And send the word out to the tech world—this time not the big companies but the technological innovation community large and small—that your country has the right digital infrastructure in place and is open to companies coming with their product and experimenting with its application using that infrastructure.

Make your country a “sandbox” where—under supervision, of course—new innovations can be trialled. The sheer scale of invention out there is remarkable, but very often the inventors have no idea of the broad world outside the limited markets of the USA and Europe, and are constrained by bureaucracy and regulation there. They are frequently of an idealistic frame of mind, which would leap at the chance to help the developing world. If they knew how. You need a regulatory environment that encourages and facilitates technology solutions and draws in innovation from around the world.

Above all, understand that the better your infrastructure, the more opportunities there will be for local businesses to thrive. With the right regulatory environment and digital platform, you will quickly find a plethora of local talent emerging that will provide a broad range of apps, locally invented. Jobs will flow. And service transformation will be possible.

All this will require big changes in the skill set and mindset of government itself. A century of slow evolution in the process of government—its structures, skill sets, means of governing and accountability—needs to be disrupted.

So, it is one thing to understand in theory that this twenty-first-century technological revolution should change everything. It is another to build the capability to exploit its potential. And it is another again to use that capability to greatest effect in changing public services and the economy, so the reimagined state becomes a reality.

Derangement, Not Rearrangement: What Government Can Learn from Tech

The French word *déranger* has always amused me. In French it has the meaning of “disturb” as in “would it disturb you if I switched on the TV?” In English it has the much more alarming meaning of “deranged,” i.e., mad, mentally disturbed, of unsound mind. “Would it derange you if I turned on the TV?” Hopefully not.

The derivation is from the French word *rang* or Old French *ranc*, meaning row, as in rows of soldiers or objects in order. It is where we get one meaning of the word “rank” from. *De-rang* means, as you would expect, changing the ranks, i.e., disordering what had been arranged in orderly fashion.

Government systems have their own very precise arrangements. They operate in traditional ways, with fixed methods, according to precepts of long-standing duration. Policy is usually built around certain “givens”—practices or principles which have grown up over the years and which circumscribe the boundaries of policy in any area; and how necessary it is to be willing to rethink them.

I didn’t reflect much on this when in office, and to be fair the technology revolution was only just getting under way. As in so many other areas, since leaving office I have had the opportunity to enlarge my knowledge and analyse not just the impact of technological innovation, but the mode of thought applied by those innovating. I have found it fascinating and instructive.

And, obviously, I have wondered whether the same mode could be applied to government. I think it can be, or at least it is worth understanding how that mode works and how it might be.

Essentially, my conclusion is that the tech innovators are engineers, not just because that is sometimes literally their discipline, but because the word accurately describes how they approach a problem.

What I mean by this is that they look at an issue completely *de novo*. They abandon all preconception. They examine it end to end, working out whether the way it's done now is the way it needs to be done.

They realise you can't fix it without touching it, i.e., sticking your hands right into it, dissecting, disaggregating, "disturbing" the assumed natural or established order of things.

Often in business and certainly in government, people are asked to change things without touching them. "Yes, we want the system to work better; reform it but you can't touch the fundamentals because they're the established order." Result? Nothing changes. Because, of course, if the system itself was working, the question wouldn't be asked.

A business flounders when the world around it is changing and—probably—some technological innovation is rendering the business model obsolete. The only business strategy which works is one that recognises the necessity of rethinking the model. Very painful; but without it, the enterprise is doomed.

This is the right approach for an existing business faced with the challenge of change. And the same is true of a business started with the purpose of disruption. Both require a "from the beginning" examination leading to insight.

Virtually every major oil and gas company in the world is rethinking their future, trying to turn from being oil and gas companies to being energy companies. If they don't, they risk obsolescence, not short term but longer term, as the imperatives of climate change and the additional competitiveness, over time, of clean forms of energy take over.

And there is a reason why the top ten companies in the world were barely in existence twenty-five years ago. Technology has disturbed traditional business.

Tesla is now the largest car company in the world by market cap. Except it isn't really a "car" company. It is also one of the world's largest makers of batteries. It has built one of the largest factories in the world, the newest and most effective robots; redesigned the material to make cars, the way the materials are made, the electronics inside the car. It has one of America's largest data centres. (In a similar way BYD—the Chinese electric vehicle company—started life as an energy generation and storage company before going on to become an industrial giant.)

SpaceX has made the most effective rockets, better than those built by NASA, or China or Russia or anyone else.

Today, in Africa, if we want rural connectivity to the remote areas of a country, satellite not cable will be the way to achieve it, faster and at much lower cost. Starlink has put more satellites into space than the rest of the world combined.

All of this has happened through the ingenuity of teams assembled by one extraordinary innovator—Elon Musk.

What is interesting to me is the way he has re-engineered every step of production. Yes, the car will be electric. But it needs a battery. The right ones for the car don't exist, so create them. Eventually it will be self-driving. So it needs hyper-complex electronics powered by AI. The metal should be lighter but more resistant to crash damage. Make it by robots for efficiency and speed. But there aren't ones available. So invent them. Why have a vast network of salesrooms? Just let the customer order the car online and have the capacity to ship immediately.

Why send space rockets into space which can't be reused? Work out why that is the case and change it.

Make satellites smaller, cheaper and easier to launch, and then launch thousands.

The point is both in the literal and figurative sense: there is in train a vast process of re-engineering.

Advances in AI—especially generative AI—computing power, clean energy like hydrogen and fusion, and big steps forward in bioscience—all create possibilities of change and the disturbing of the conventional ways of working, unimaginable a few years back.

Of course, it is one thing to understand these changes. It's quite another to apply them effectively, unless you adopt an engineering mindset.

Recently I have become acquainted with a company reimagining agriculture—specifically indoor growing. It was the brainchild of Larry Ellison, with whom my institute has a partnership, and who is the founder of Oracle, the data giant. The idea is to grow food close to the point of consumption, of higher quality and nutritional value than that currently available and with a continual not seasonal cycle of production.

Of course, greenhouse growing has a long history and a traditional way of being done. And so when Larry and his team came to consider how to build the new company they began with a limited number of useful innovations in seeds and cultivation, while utilising a conventional glass and metal greenhouse.

But over time, they realised that, to maximise the benefits of indoor growing, which began as a simple way to avoid the vagaries of the local climate, they had to reinvent every step of the process, from bioscience to make the best seeds, to robotics to pick the fruit, to new ways of managing heat and light, to a wholly new material for the construction of the greenhouse. Each step along the way was reimagined, if necessary, a new system of production created, while—here is what is interesting—using as much engineering expertise as agricultural know-how. Bringing in people from outside the area of agriculture allowed the development of completely new thinking because they were not bound by any conventions, but could look at the problem through an entirely different lens.

Now let us try to apply the same reasoning to government, to the state.

As I pointed out earlier, services like health or education or criminal justice can be changed to serve a deeper purpose: moving healthcare from cure to prevention of illness; education as a means of personal improvement through life; criminal justice as making us safer not only punishing crime.

But think about the state itself and how AI could transform it. Government is all about process and AI should be able to automate large chunks of it.

It should need far fewer people working for it in traditional public service “process” jobs. And different types of people: often domain experts who can apply technology effectively, alongside more traditional guardians of the public interest—civil servants. But these civil servants would be relieved of a lot of the tedium of government bureaucracy and therefore be better able to give advice and prevent problems with a much better chance of being right.

The state would be more strategic: setting frameworks of regulation but doing much less implementation.

Systems of accountability would be much more accurate and much simpler, because the data would yield much better evidence of what was working and what wasn't.

The state would do much less controlling and much more empowering—it could make individual choice easier to exercise. It wouldn't be less powerful when it needed to have power to stop bad things, but it would have much less power to interfere unnecessarily because the bureaucracy would be much less.

For this to be done, there needs to be a recognition that re-engineering the state requires a different approach to governance; not just a reform but a reimagining.

Embarking on such a serious and deep reshaping of the state is a huge political mission. It requires careful study and analysis, a coherent plan, a willingness to push forward and accept that there will be errors and missteps along the way, and an explanation as to why it should happen and the benefits of it. In the end, though, it should ensure better outcomes at

reduced cost and therefore allow lower taxes or higher expenditure on things which at present are underfunded.

Everything else is secondary to this. Otherwise, we are locked in a fruitless and ultimately dispiriting debate about how we extract more from the same system with tweaks, and in a twentieth-century political fight over margins of tax and spending, which do nothing to alter the fundamentals of how we either tax or spend.

So, if we want derangement and not rearrangement, we need to think like innovators and not guardians of the system.

PART V

Foreign Policy

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

International Affairs: The Importance of Being Consistent

A funny thing happens on the way into government. Before government rarely does foreign policy feature that much in a Leader's mind. It may do if there is some big all-encompassing event, with domestic political implications. But otherwise it is the daily-bread issues which predominate—living standards, health, education, crime, immigration and so on.

But once in government—and reasonably fast—foreign policy does loom large.

And here, as in everything else, strategy is key. In fact, particularly so. Foreign policy requires definition. Don't stumble about in a series of disjointed manoeuvres. Think deeply about where your country fits in the geopolitical landscape under your leadership and why.

Unless your country is a major power, you will have limited influence in controlling its status within the global order. But you do nevertheless need to know what its place is. By this, I mean you need clarity on where it stands, who it stands with, how it wants to be regarded internationally. Your allies (and sometimes your enemies) need to know what your position is.

How does a country balance—in a changing and now multi-polar world—the different attractions, vulnerabilities and necessities of relationships West and East? How does it form or sustain the right alliances to protect its interests?

International relations will involve tough choices, albeit in a different way from domestic policy. But a lot of the time foreign policy is relatively

easy, waters are smooth, the sailing is plain; captaining the Ship of State can be quite relaxing, even enjoyable, without the destabilising squalls of the political weather back home.

But come a big global moment, a veritable geopolitical tsunami, or even a mere storm, the captain better get on deck and choose which way to steer. At that point the compass you have, as Leader, carefully constructed, if indeed you have done so, becomes essential. And if you haven't, the damage can be quite substantial.

A friend to everyone and an enemy to no one is a principle most countries would like to follow. But it never turns out like that. A crisis arises and there are different sides. For example, Russia and Ukraine. Two sides—with their respective allies. Those nations which have tried to avoid picking a side have ended up pleasing neither, unless, as the Gulf States have done, they have been able to offer something—in their case economic—to give both parties an interest in keeping their relationship with them strong.

Unless your country is uniquely placed in some way, the risk of trying to please everyone is that—rather as in domestic politics—you end up pleasing no one.

As British prime minister I had a very straightforward framework for foreign policy: America's closest ally; strong partner to Europe; and in the new Department for International Development, a top-quality soft-power asset deployable in the developing world. Each of these positions was clear, and the relationships pursued complemented and compounded each other.

So, at one level, there was definition and it worked.

Maintaining the relationships, however, could hurt politically.

Post-9/11, I decided we would be “shoulder to shoulder” with the USA. Easy to say. But then through the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, the UK had to decide whether to be a real ally, making real commitment, or whether it would merely cheer from the sidelines. We chose the former and there will be many who think that choice was wrong. But I believed it was crucial for Britain in the long term to remain America's closest ally, because it would serve our deep interests.

The point is, for these purposes, not to debate which choice was right but to underline both that it *was* a choice and that such foreign policy choices can be really tough. Only the foreign policy experts sitting in their armchairs believe in the “have your cake and eat it” philosophy of policymaking.

Relations with Europe were never plain sailing for me either. Britain, as we know, is Eurosceptic. Ever since Margaret Thatcher took her handbag to a European Council meeting to demand a fairer deal on European finance for Britain, an exceptional case where Britain was rightly correcting an injustice, banging the table became for a large part of British opinion the gold standard for how you routinely conduct European business.

I would be attacked after every European Council meeting for not sticking it to my fellow Leaders in the name of “standing up for Britain.” Of course, in a myriad of ways when promoting British interests, I would need those Leaders’ trust and support, so it would have been an immensely foolish way of behaving. But had I gone with the political flow, life would have been a lot easier.

Even with development, my government’s insistence on increasing the aid budget and being a leading player in the developing world, which again I thought essential for the country’s long-term interests, was politically highly controversial. Had we put it to a referendum we would have lost that one too!

Where a country stands, who it stands with, what the guiding principles are and what price you are prepared to pay for upholding them, these are integral to the foreign policy strategic thinking a Leader must do.

There are big power relationships, which most often will require countries to search for actions they can take to protect those relationships and give the big powers a reason to treat more junior partners with respect.

In today’s multi-polar world, this has become trickier and much more complicated.

Then there are the relationships with immediate neighbours which can often be tense. These need to be smoothed out, a *modus vivendi* reached on

simmering or potentially explosive issues, a means of confidential communication established.

Instability next door can easily cross the border into your country. So how, without interfering in that other country, do you take avoiding action?

And then increasingly as the world splits into regions wanting to wield influence partly to mitigate big-power politics, there are the relationships that are regionally relevant.

All of these different facets of international relations need to be woven into a policy which is then pursued with consistency of purpose and commitment.

Ukraine has, rightly, prompted a recalibration of many nations' defence strategy. Finland and Sweden have joined NATO. Germany has increased defence spending significantly despite fiscal pressures. The transatlantic alliance has leapt back into life.

Immediate anxiety over Russia's present behaviour towards Ukraine has provoked a deeper worry about China's future behaviour, especially given the tensions over the status of Taiwan. This in turn must lead to a resurgent strategy on the part of the West to be prepared for all contingencies where China is concerned.

In 2022 and 2023 the West looked resolute. NATO was strengthened; the G7 announced a \$600 billion programme of engagement with the developing world seeking to compete with the One Belt One Road plan of China; the USA stepped up its soft power push into Africa and South East Asia.

But then fatigue set in; interest waned. The Gaza conflict happened. Strategic focus became blurred. At the time of writing the fate of Ukraine hangs in the balance.

Yet the fact remains that if its fate mattered in early 2022, it matters more than ever two years further on. Not just Western allies but—as important—Western enemies will watch to see if the commitment shown at the beginning is a commitment shown until the end. If not, we will pay a much heavier price with a much larger commitment later.

As I often had cause to remark upon ruefully while in government, unfortunately, in politics and geopolitics, the crises don't come sequentially. They come on their own timetable which can be concurrent with other crises.

We presently have conflict in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East. We also face conflict in Africa, where there is a crisis in the Sudan and another in the Sahel—that clutch of nations across the north of Africa where the people are ravaged by the combined problems of poverty, exploding populations, poor institutions, extremism and bad governance. There is no one studying this situation who does not believe that Europe will face an influx of immigration and jihadism from the Sahel in the future. But the strategic will to act to stave off collapse and put the region on its feet is absent.

Then, apart from the crises, there is the need for consistency and coherence of approach to soft power. To give an example. We want the support of developing nations in the fight against climate change. But we also have to support their development, which inevitably involves those countries having better transport links, including airports and airlines, creating the necessary infrastructure, and so consuming more energy.

What those twin priorities mean in practice is that we should both help them to develop and do so in the most sustainable way possible. Underline the word “possible.” If we refuse them investment for, say, natural gas projects they will burn either cheap coal or heavy diesel oil. At the same time, they will lose the funding gas would give them. The consequence will be that they don't develop. And that's something they will never accept. The reality is that gas is an essential transitional fuel. The EU now recognises this. But the investment gap was allowed to remain for too long, when two policies were operating not in alignment but in contradiction of one another, thus alienating key allies crucial for the broader Western strategy.

The point is policy needs to be devised strategically and with care; but then pursued with consistency of purpose and implementation.

Where the big risk comes is when foreign policy is pursued inconsistently, when events or issues are reacted to in an ad hoc way, when an awareness of the importance of clarity and coherence is neglected.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

In Foreign Policy, Personal Relationships Are Built on Trust

In opposition, you can cherry-pick and, within reason, get away with loose language and positions on foreign policy. But in government, every relationship damaged by inconsiderate actions or statements can result in a real price paid by the country and you as a Leader.

By the same token, creating trust between Leaders can pay rich dividends. And once in government, you as Leader will find that trust is the currency of international relationships. If the currency is cheapened, it can harm your nation's interests—sometimes seriously; if it is valued, it can advance them. This can happen in small ways and large.

My good relationship with Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi—despite our very different politics and understandable anxiety about it among my advisers—turned out to be crucial in London winning the hotly contested bid to host the 2012 Olympics, when he switched Italian support from France to the UK.

My Home Secretary, David Blunkett, had a great relationship with his French opposite number—at the time Nicolas Sarkozy—though one was Labour and the other Conservative. That sorted the refugee crisis at the Calais port, at least for a while.

Anyone who has been a prime minister or president would be able to give similar examples of where political friendships—even across the normal political divides—have proved vital in advancing national interests.

Sometimes the relationships in foreign policy exist already and the task is to nurture them. Other times, the relationships have to be built. And here it is important to say how foreign policy should not be conducted.

Government is not an NGO. The Leader is not an activist. You are not leading a pressure group speaking their truth to power. As Leader you are the power. And it is a duty of a government to protect and enhance its country's interests. Yes, its country's values, too. But that is easy to say and frequently hard to do.

When I was in opposition, I foolishly allowed my party to say that in government we would pursue an "ethical foreign policy." And who would want to pursue an "unethical foreign policy"?!

But the reason it was foolish is that it implied a standard of morality that is completely inconsistent with the conduct of a country's affairs in the real world.

Needless to say, once in government, I realised the standard couldn't be maintained. The retreat from it was an embarrassment. But the mistake wasn't the retreat; it was the enunciation of a policy that had no chance of surviving contact with grown-up politics.

There are important countries with whom a Leader will have to deal, who may do things public opinion in your own nation disapproves of—or that you the Leader disagree with. These usually concern human rights issues—and more often it is Western countries that face this dilemma, though not always.

You need to have your stance right from the beginning.

If it is in your country's interests to engage and have friendly relations with another country—and these interests could be economic, but they could also be to do with security, or with that other country's ability to affect issues which concern your country—your job is to make the engagement happen and work.

You will be criticised at home but that comes with the job and can never be a reason for failing to do your duty.

If there are areas of disagreement with that other country, raise them. No harm in that. And maybe some good will come of it. But do it in a way that doesn't imperil the relationship.

Now naturally there may be countries that do something so egregious or detrimental to your values that they also damage your interests. So the calculus of those interests changes. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a good example.

But the point is: foreign policy is a hard-headed not a soft-hearted business, in which relations of trust need to be built and maintained even when politically difficult to do so.

For example, in the case of Saudi Arabia there is no doubt about the things with which we disagree. But there is equally no doubt that the new leadership is pursuing the most ambitious programme of reform and modernisation the country has ever seen, with a virtual social revolution taking place.

This change will fundamentally affect the region and to a degree the world, in ways which are positive for our security and the global economy.

It was awkward when the Biden administration had to back down from its initial position of hostility to the new Saudi leadership and engage with it. But it should never have been in that position in the first place, not because criticism of human rights abuses, or condemnation of the terrible murder of Jamal Khashoggi, was wrong but because that criticism shouldn't have obliterated the things happening on the other side of the ledger that were good, worthy of support and hugely in American interests.

So, President Biden was right to change tack.

In doing so, he wasn't putting interests before values but accepting that to defend those values and those interests, he had to take a balanced and hard-headed approach to the conduct of foreign policy.

Failure to have done so would have alienated an ally and pushed that ally further towards China, something which would be directly contrary to America's interests and values. An NGO isn't obliged to deal with those nuances of what is ethical. The Leader of a nation is.

So, it is important to think through the implications of each important position you take as a Leader.

It is vital, too, never to forget that the Leader you're dealing with is also human. And at a certain level, the relationship you forge with them is very much like a friendship.

The other Leader must know that if you give your word, it will be kept; that if they make an agreement with you, you will stick to it; or that delicate matters which should remain confidential don't turn up in your media in a disobliging way.

When half a century and more ago, Henry Kissinger as national security adviser and Richard Nixon as president of the USA were engaged in the immensely sensitive opening to China after years of complete diplomatic isolation from each other, they had to act with subtlety, insight, wisdom and understanding. But they also had to build trust. Confidences were kept. Each tried to help the other. Personal relationships were created, not least between Kissinger and Zhou Enlai.

At crucial times, each had to give their word and each had to honour it. And eventually trust came into being and agreements could be made.

That trust was preconditional to the breakthrough. Without it, the necessary step forward might never have happened or happened much later. And I believe the thaw in the relationship between China and America was also significant in China's leadership enlarging their perspective and seeing how a capitalist nation and markets could have advantages.

At a nation-to-nation level, Leader to Leader, political affiliation, the other country's internal politics, don't really matter. What matters is that you can have frank conversations about things which are important for one or the other or both of you.

The reason why maintaining good relations is tricky is that you may be dealing with an issue where your politics and the other Leader's politics are in contradiction. In fact, they often are. Your public opinion is pushing one way; theirs in the opposite direction.

A Leader has to be smart enough to recognise this and strong enough to take account of it. Always understand: the other side has its politics. If you disrespect that or dismiss it because it's inconvenient to yours, you make a big mistake. That is where the trust is lost, and it is a very long road back.

Leaders hate to see other Leaders grandstanding, even if they do a fair amount of it themselves. Occasionally you need to; but do it only out of necessity and recognise the price you will pay.

Trust is the currency of international diplomacy. Build it up, and use it wisely.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Navigating the Straits Between the USA and China (and Don't Forget India)

Most of this book explores general principles of governing. But there is one specific shift in twenty-first-century geopolitics that deserves individual attention, and that is the relationship between the USA and China. America is many countries' principal security partner, is the world's strongest economy, has the world's foremost language of choice and much of the world's popular culture, and carries a large heft of traditional experience in global affairs. China is almost every country's largest trading partner, after their nearest neighbour. Talk to virtually any Leader today, and very soon up comes the topic of navigation between these two giants.

For years, certainly when I was in office, there were high, though in retrospect naive, hopes of a happy ending to the rise of China: "In the end, don't worry, they will become like us."

We're not at the end, of course, and that should not be forgotten; but right now, and for the foreseeable future, China is not like us and shows no indication of becoming so. If anything, the signs point in the opposite direction.

America, after some dithering, as is its wont, has fully woken up to the "threat" posed by China. Indeed, it is probably the one issue that unites what is otherwise a fractured political scene. The USA, therefore, is taking measures month by month that all carry the same basic message: the USA and China are locked in a great power competition and America had better win.

There was a time when America would say to countries—allies and neutrals—“Look, we understand, you’re doing business with China; it’s fine—we get it, carry on; but be careful, keep us informed, and now let’s talk about something else.” These days, the USA doesn’t want to talk about something else, it wants to talk about this. And in clear—even mildly menacing—terms.

So, we have a situation where the economic ties with China are real and, for many nations, seemingly irreplaceable; and US pressure not to engage with China is likewise real and seemingly irreducible.

China has dropped its “quietly, quietly” approach to diplomacy in favour of a “dare to win” mantra that has, not unnaturally, severely jolted America into not only waking up but getting the equivalent of an intravenous drip of caffeine shoved into its political veins.

The American trade with China is still vast—many hundreds of billions of dollars. But it is now subject to policy-imposed headwinds. In areas of security sensitivity or even industrial competitiveness, the USA is applying tough tariffs and, in particular, is now throttling or attempting to throttle China’s access to the advanced computer chips vital for higher-end AI.

The current technological revolution is creating a whole new field of competition in which the stakes are incredibly high and on which neither side believes it can afford to lose.

In addition, global conflict, notably the war in Ukraine, has created a burgeoning alliance between China and Russia, with Iran and North Korea sometimes lining up alongside them, which has resulted in opposition to the American/Western position on virtually any major flashpoint of geopolitics, a situation which then effectively paralyses the United Nations Security Council, which was not in great shape to begin with.

Now, all the above needs some qualification, or at least some caution in thinking the nature of the USA–China relationship is immutably destined to stay hostile or even descend into military conflict.

The USA, for its part, will reserve some space for cooperation while engaging in competition and occasional confrontation. It will do so out of

necessity. There is no major global challenge today, from dealing with pandemics, to climate change, to the world's economic stability, which does not require China's active participation to resolve it.

So, the rest of the world watches this complex geopolitical dance and tries to calculate its own way around the dance floor, without bumping too hard into either partner.

That process of navigation, which was tricky a couple of years ago, is now likely to be even trickier. Leaders therefore need a strategy to handle it, recognising that their own influence over the issue is—except for a very few nations—unfortunately negligible.

First things first: treat the issue as requiring its own special plan. Think carefully of the ground to camp on, i.e., the parameters and principles governing your nation's relationship with both powers. Maybe one is a relationship of necessity, one of inclination. Usually, China will fit into the first category, the USA the second. Or maybe you genuinely want equidistance, though be mindful of the dangers of ending up offending both parties. The point is, for these purposes, you need a strategy, not an ad hoc lurching from one position to another.

Understand how other geopolitical players will position themselves, because that may affect your position.

For example, whatever you may hear to the contrary, Europe will ultimately go with the Americans. They won't like doing so at times, and they may play around with not doing it, but don't be fooled. The invasion of Ukraine by Putin, and the closeness between the Russian and Chinese leaderships, has removed any ambiguity of a deep nature. Europe will line up with the USA, as will such other traditional American allies as Australia and Japan. So that has to be factored into the strategic calculation.

Despite the short-term risk of isolationism, over time the USA will start to be much more active around the world in pursuit of the winning goal. In Africa we see this happening already. In the Middle East, where the conventional thinking is that the USA has vacated the space, allowing China to move in, America will re-engage and will, if the price of renewed

power domination in that region is a security guarantee to nations worried particularly about Iran, give that guarantee, maybe not quite in a NATO Article 5 form (whereby an attack on one is seen as an attack on all), but something reasonably bankable. In Asia, it will understand the mistake it made in leaving trade negotiations to founder and will reinvigorate them.

That doesn't mean China will retreat or stand still. On the contrary, it will move up several gears, building on economic ties, and possibly starting to export technology solutions as its willingness to use data in ways the West finds unacceptable gains it an edge. The Chinese won't apply pressure as overtly as the Americans; their approach will be more subtle. It will be a version of "no strings; do whatever you like within your own borders," no "tiresome" lectures on human rights, the ostensible rejection of American "arrogance," and, in contrast to Western bureaucracy constantly tripping up Western efficacy, the promise of speed of action. A Leader needs to understand, though, that "strings" come in many forms—and not all with a "human rights" tag.

Over time China will begin to feel the burden of playing the geopolitical game at the highest level. It can be a Big Dog by all means; but remember the Big Dog is usually blamed by the little dogs. Power is a responsibility and China will find out soon what that means.

Amid this great power tension, regional and continental alliances—the European Union, ASEAN, the African Union, the developing groupings in Latin America—will become of increasing importance. What nations struggle to do alone, they may achieve together. Strategies held or fashioned in common, united positions that collectively have the weight to make both giants pause or tread carefully, making the competition between the two also a platform for advantage, for extracting the best deal, the most credible assurances, the least breakable promises—this approach will gain traction.

Remember, the advantage of great power competition for everyone else is that—to a degree—the great powers are also looking to persuade, entice and prompt nations to join their "side." This can yield an opportunity to

keep both sweet. But bear in mind it is *to a degree*. Play that hand with care. Don't overplay it.

Finally, it needs to be borne in mind that the USA and China are not the only major players in town. India is on the march. It has the world's biggest population. It has fantastic technology, energetic youth, a culture that is bursting with colour and creativity. Once two superpowers become three, lots of opportunities for countries to engage in smart diplomacy are created.

The population aspect of all this is interesting. It's interesting in general terms, because the world's population is set to start shrinking, giving rise to the complete opposite of the challenge the world thought it had, namely too large a population. And it's interesting in country-by-country terms, because, if current trends continue, this depopulation will not be evenly spread. The population of China is set to decline quite dramatically—to around 800 million over the next decades. The population of India will soar to 1.5 billion, making it far and away the largest in the world. This is bound to have major great power consequences.

So, a Leader taking a long-term view of their country's interests, should regard building the relationship with India as an indispensable part of a modern foreign policy.

But more immediately, we should not assume that American or Chinese politics will stay static.

American politics—wildly fragmented and unpredictable as it may currently be—may settle down again. The Chinese leadership, which looks all-powerful, may find the limits of its power manifested. An experiment in Leninist central control, which I would say has never proved sustainable anywhere, may not yield China, with its diverse population and thriving middle class, as an exception but rather return it to the rule.

The importance of this rivalry between these two superpowers and how it affects other countries means a Leader cannot afford to stumble into a position on it, but must frame it with thought and care.

Foreign Policy Is Becoming Domestic Policy

The navigation challenge between America and China underlines the degree to which foreign policy is affecting domestic policy.

To a degree foreign policy has always had the capacity to affect domestic politics. Even in calm geopolitical times it matters. There are Leaders to see. International issues which even if they don't have massive domestic impact immediately, can, if ignored, come to do so. Hitherto largely unnoticed disputes with other nations which need settling. All these are things which may not hit the headlines, but they can hit the smooth conduct of government business.

You realise as a Leader that how your country is seen externally does actually matter internally because it plays back into your politics. Before you're in government, no one much cares what you as a potential Leader may think and you have, usually, very limited knowledge. Once you're in government, suddenly there is a whole list of new partnerships and relationships which need to be managed, built and tended to.

However, in recent times, the conduct of foreign policy has moved from being usually of second or even third order importance in domestic politics, to having the potential to become first order.

There was a time when foreign ministers would float benignly above the scrappy melee of the politics of everyday living. They would spend large amounts of time abroad attending dignified gatherings where politicians exchange positions on issues with politeness and elegance,

returning every so often to report to a parliament all too willing to be patronised as the minister would regale it with tales of places and people with unpronounceable names about which the members had to feign interest in order to appear worldly.

OK, some might have had a particular interest in a particular country or issue, but by and large that would rarely impinge on the purview of the Leader. Global issues tended not to impinge on the electorate, either, unless they were of such significance that they affected domestic policy or were to do with local differences with immediate neighbours.

External politics, in other words, mattered much less than internal.

This is changing.

The USA–China rivalry is one factor.

The Ukraine war is another, because of its scale and impact on supply chains of grain and fertiliser; and for less obvious reasons, because it has upset our assumptions about modern conflict.

A full-scale war—mid-twentieth-century in nature between two competing conventional armies with hundreds of thousands of casualties right on the border of the European Union—was unthinkable a few years ago. Now it is a reality. The aggressor is a United Nations Security Council permanent member.

It has been supported in the aggression by China, which has become much more assertive or aggressive, depending on your viewpoint.

And through the conflict, a new alliance has sprung into being between Russia and Iran; and then, even more bizarrely, between Russia and North Korea.

So, perceptibly and unmistakably, a club has been formed: China, Russia, Iran and North Korea.

It is a club without a long waiting list. But it nevertheless includes two nuclear powers and two aspirant nuclear powers, the world's second largest economy and largest country by land mass, one Islamic republic and the world's most isolated and unpredictable dictatorship.

It is not a club of equals. And it is not one in which the Chinese will want to be parked in. China is much more powerful, more sophisticated and far-sighted than the other members of its current circle, and even though it proclaims that the alliance with Russia is “without limits,” it will in reality make those limits very clear, albeit privately.

China’s current position, though, leads to a paradox in Western policy.

As we have seen, China and America are now in open confrontation and competition.

America sees China as its biggest threat. And by dint of size and weight, it is. But America also believes—as do the rest of us, even if it is an unspoken belief—that China alone of the club members can be expected to have a significant interest in stability and a significant aversion to unpredictability.

Therefore, to a degree and paradoxically, we rely on China to constrain the tendency towards instability and unpredictability on the part of the other countries with which it is currently aligned.

It was China that took the use of tactical nuclear weapons by Russia off the table early in the Ukraine conflict. It is China that supports efforts to prevent escalation of the Gaza war. And China alone has the capability of taming the wildness of the North Korean despot.

At least we hope all this is so.

But the shock of what Russia has done, the forming of this extraordinary club, China’s turn towards heavy-handed Leninist leadership, combined with its determination to return Taiwan to mainland Chinese control, means that for Western countries today, belief and hope are risky guides to policy.

We may hope China does not go rogue on us. We may believe it won’t; but we can no longer form policy wisely on this basis.

The mood in the West will, therefore, come back to a familiar lesson from history: to achieve peace, prepare for war.

The conflict in Gaza has been very different in origin and nature. However, it too has repercussions that are not only global but that affect the domestic politics of nations.

Quite apart from the immediate and tragic impact of the conflict on Israelis and Palestinians, it has fuelled division and resentment more widely. Division inside the West, as local Muslim populations have combined with (usually leftist) traditional political elements to attack the Western governments' (predominantly) pro-Israel stance. Division between the West and the global Muslim community. Resentment at what are perceived or regularly claimed as "double standards" of Western policy. Western public opinion is itself divided, not simply about the conflict but about the place of Muslim communities within Western society.

It needs to be borne in mind, too, that whereas a lot of Western commentary sees the Arab world and wider Middle East as anti-Israel and unified in their support of the Palestinian cause, the reality is more nuanced. There is huge support for Palestinian statehood, but underneath the surface there is also deep ambivalence about the role of the Muslim Brotherhood (Hamas being part of that movement) in that cause. And there is a profound distrust and fear of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

And as it becomes clear that—as with Gaza—the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood and the Shia Islamic Republic are prepared to work together, this ambivalence grows.

Increasingly across the region, there is—often understated—a clear distinction being made between Islam and Islamism, between the religion and the distortion of it into a political ideology.

This distinction is also entering the internal politics of Western countries. The West, up to now, has been quite successfully persuaded that "Islamophobia" is the same as anxiety about the integration of Muslim communities into Western society.

But the Gaza conflict has heightened unease among the host populations in Western countries about the degree to which their Muslim

communities have become influenced by Islamist thinking. This will deepen.

Political parties, especially those on the left, will worry about the electoral impact of pro-Palestinian protesters on their vote should they not take a robust enough stance in favour of the Palestinian cause; the rest of the population will be wary of the existence within those protests of Islamist groups; and this will push politics to the right unless the parties from the progressive wing of politics find the correct political balance to strike.

On the other hand, there are increasing numbers of voices in the Muslim world fighting back against the attempt to politicise their religion, and they could find common cause with those in Western countries worried about the influence of Islamism. Both will believe that a just and reasonable solution to the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is in their mutual interests.

So, there are many different layers of complexity to the politics of this issue, but there is no doubt that it has, nonetheless, the potential directly to affect a nation's internal politics.

The point is that whether it is tension between the USA and China, the war in Ukraine or the conflict in Gaza, all are feeding into the domestic agenda of nations irrespective of those nations' direct involvement in them.

This melding of the foreign and the domestic will increase as the world shifts, as has just been described, from two superpowers to three—the USA, China and India—by the middle of the century.

For the first time in modern history, Western nations will not dominate global politics. Like it or not we will live in a multi-polar world. The West may fear this; the “club” will rejoice in it; some “neutral” nations may welcome it and some not. But there are profound implications for Leaders devising foreign policy.

The world may go multi-polar, but for the West in general and the USA in particular, things won't stop there. Because one of the poles is a club that is outright hostile to the West, it will also be necessary to discuss how best to combat it.

This debate and the different positions taken by parties and Leaders will influence quite substantially the outcome of domestic politics.

And as a consequence of this Great Power/East–West rivalry, other countries will be forced to adopt their own strategy towards it. In doing so, they will want to assess what will be the policy changes they can expect from Western countries.

I would say “neutral” countries can expect the following:

- Western nations will beef up their defence capabilities, and defence policy will become a much more active part of domestic policy.
- There will be a deep dive into what modern defence capability looks like, given developments in technology especially around drones; and a big emphasis on cyber defensive and offensive capacity.
- Western nations will believe that technological superiority over China is a “must” and will do what is necessary to achieve it.
- India will be wooed by everyone. India’s policy will be India First. But the rest of the world will increasingly ask what that means for them and will want answers.
- The West at some point will start correcting the immense bureaucratic flaws that hinder its support for the developing world, and begin utilising its immense advantages, not least in the private sector.
- The international system—UN, WTO, World Bank, IMF—will come under intense strain because of geopolitical rivalry.
- Trade will become a weapon of choice, with potentially damaging consequences for the global economy.
- For issues requiring global cooperation—climate, health, etc.—there will be a tension between the acceptance that action on a global scale is necessary and the anxiety that such action will involve individual players losing the competitive edge.

- The West will start to take a much more pragmatic approach to foreign policy.
- A recognition will develop that the distinction between Islam and Islamism is a critical fulcrum for policy and allies.

The effect of all this will be to make foreign policy a much more complicated business, requiring strategic grip, deep analysis, and situational awareness on a larger scale and at a greater level of sophistication than most countries, up to now, have needed.

Foreign ministers will no longer be flying at high altitude, looking down on the rough political terrain below, but will be observing it at close quarters, in a vehicle with their political Leaders sitting alongside them and frequently taking the wheel.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

How to Negotiate

I almost called this chapter “How to Conduct a Meeting,” because a skill worth learning all on its own is how you make a meeting productive, how you manage its flow and guide its path to arrive at the desired outcome.

However, the meetings that matter are those in which you have a specific aim. And that involves a negotiation. Or at a minimum a circumnavigation. A requirement not merely to have an objective, but the necessity of a strategy to achieve it.

Leadership is a constant process of negotiation. It begins with knowing what you want. Your strategic goal must be absolutely clear—to you, but not necessarily and sometimes not desirably to those with whom you’re negotiating.

That sounds obvious, but often I come across Leaders who approach an important meeting with only a vague idea of what it is they want out of it. The result is usually a nothing.

You need to know with precision. That way, you can be diverted, the meeting can go down dark or blind alleys, the formalities can intrude on the substance, the goal seemingly obscured by irrelevancies, but you can find a path back—if you’re clear enough about where it is you want to go.

Of course, negotiations come in all different shapes and sizes. Sometimes it’s a simple demand and the answer is a yes or no. In such cases, unless you’re confident of a positive answer, you have to consider what it is the other party may want from you or consider something you might offer in exchange for the favour you’re asking.

Put yourself in their shoes. Will they think that you have a close enough relationship that they're prepared to yield just because it is you who is asking? Then ask yourself whether you have ever built on that relationship and if not, why not. Also ask yourself whether, if you were them, you would be inclined to give, and what might make you so inclined.

Suppose you conclude during the meeting that the answer will be a negative one. For whatever reason, they're not going to give what you want. How do you end that meeting without embarrassment, without them feeling they have let you down, even if they have? The chances are that this won't be the only negotiation with them, or it may be that time and circumstance could reopen the same negotiation more favourably.

In such instances you need to find a way of ending the meeting gracefully, in a way which preserves or even creates goodwill, suggesting possibly a period of further reflection, or keeping of the matter under advisement, or just showing understanding of the reasons for refusal.

Another lesson I learnt in politics: a good meeting is where you have spoken less than the other person.

Get them to talk first. Get them to open up. The most important factor in any meeting is knowing when to keep quiet. Allow them full rein to speak and therefore to reveal.

This can be crucial as you adjust tactics in the course of the meeting. You may have thought the key to success was their attitude to *x* but it turns out it was really *y*.

I learnt a lot of these lessons conducting the Northern Ireland peace process. We were fortunate that I could spend the time on it. The parties—after we got past the preliminary unburdening of historical positions—were prepared to listen to the concerns of the other. Over time, the fixed and absolutist positions yielded to a recognition that there were true, mutual interests, which meant compromise was not regarded as betrayal. I had a great partner in the Irish prime minister. And we were patient, hearing everyone out over a prolonged period. In addition, each meeting and

negotiation had a clear point to it, which helped remove the innumerable obstacles to a final agreement.

During the past two decades, I have been engaged in negotiations over the Middle East peace process around the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. For most of that time, frankly, there has been little process and only sporadic peace. And the contrast with Northern Ireland is instructive.

The negotiations in the Middle East have involved the two principal parties—but also the wider region, the USA, Europe, virtually every country with an opinion on the issue, and that is most of the world.

There are many reasons why this “peace process” is difficult. But one of them is that almost all the guidelines set out above have never applied.

Each party is convinced that only they really understand the other and they absolutely don’t. So, rather than putting themselves in the other’s shoes, they wield a huge shoehorn to try to force their own shoe on the other’s foot.

Meetings tend to focus on matters either too large to ensure the meeting has a precise objective, or too small to make it worth top-level engagement from the parties or the international community.

The Americans lead the negotiations fitfully, sometimes super engaged, other times somewhat detached, but to be fair it’s unreasonable to expect them to be otherwise given all the different calls on their time and political bandwidth.

Countries with some influence use/abuse the issue within their own politics, which often means subsequent negotiations in which they participate start in a poor spirit.

The degree of trust between the parties themselves is negligible. Therefore, they’re never sure the negotiation is worth it.

And above all, the negotiations have never really got to the heart of the matter, because that would involve a sustained level of thought and commitment not just from the parties at the centre of it all but the

international community, which, given the turnover in leadership internationally, is hardly likely.

Believe it or not, I still think this peace process can ultimately succeed—because there are new forces in the region, who will commit the time and energy, and because the Gaza conflict has brought home to the parties the impossibility of managing the issue rather than solving it.

And then these lessons of how to negotiate will be essential. But this is a subject, outside the scope of this book, which deserves treatment in its own right.

In negotiations, occasionally, it is right to threaten, to go brutal. But here is another big lesson. You can threaten. But misread the psychology of the person you're threatening or make an empty threat and that is fatal.

An example of doing it right would be the way President Kennedy handled the Cuban Missile Crisis. He made a threat. It was credible. But he also had the ingenuity and skill to create a relationship with Khrushchev which meant that he could nonetheless negotiate a deal which averted war.

An example of doing it wrong—fortunately in a much less critical negotiation—I recall as a young and upcoming frontbench Treasury opposition spokesman, when I was part of a delegation sent to Washington, DC to argue a tax point against the US administration. We met the Treasury secretary, the formidable James Baker. Overreaching way out of my league, I threatened that if our demand was not met, there would be retaliation against the USA by the British Parliament. At which point, he laid out with brutal clarity the counter-retaliation the administration would take. Needless to say, I had got out a pea-shooter and he held a bazooka. I retreated red-faced.

Honey is better than vinegar unless you're tossing lettuce leaves for a salad.

Never lose your cool. It's demeaning and doesn't work.

When the other side is talking nonsense, consider whether it is worth pointing it out or whether there are bigger things you need to argue about. If

they have a grievance, irrespective of whether you think it's justified, hear them out. Let them get it off their chest.

So, draw the other out. If you know it's going to be a tricky negotiation, begin above your bottom line so you can offer a concession at the appropriate moment to close the deal.

Think of the meeting format. The system—for completely understandable and good reasons—detests a one-on-one between Leaders. They want a record kept. They want to know what has been agreed and why.

But relationships of strength between Leaders are rarely created by two Leaders sitting opposite each other with phalanxes of officials on either side. The other Leader may be anxious about speaking freely; he or she may at this point not want an “accurate record.” They want to open their heart, explain their difficulties, explore your appetite for making it easy or hard for them.

Or the format might include just the closest advisers. The point is to think through what set-up will work best. Negotiations aren't legal process. They're as much subjective as objective. They're about the feel, the spirit, the relationship, about picking the right moment to strike for the finish.

Learning when to close, knowing when the right moment has arrived, is of vital importance, as I found during the tortuous Northern Ireland negotiations for the Good Friday Agreement—the founding document for the peace, in 1998. Judging it correctly then was literally the difference between success and failure.

Zero-sum games are rarely productive in politics. In Northern Ireland we finally managed to escape that bind, which was crucial in making progress. Contrast that with the Middle East, where things remain mired in zero-sum dynamics.

Ultimately, the best negotiations are always those which leave the other side with a sense of achievement. Both sides happy is the best outcome. Anything which looks like a big victory for you at the expense of the other

will be a pyrrhic victory, leaving a bad taste in the mouth of the other, for which you will pay in the future.

Even if you're delighted, even if you believe you have outmanoeuvred the other side, run rings round them, think you've been smart and they've been dumb, never show it. Don't let your people show it. Be content with the result.

Negotiation is not a science. It is an art.

PART VI

Communications in a New Media Environment

Strategic Communication: The Difference Between a Narrative and a Press Release

In many walks of life, communicating simply means informing people, telling them what you're doing, imparting knowledge. But in politics, it is both a science and an art that can make the difference between success and failure.

It is vital to distinguish between tactical communications and strategic communications. Tactical are the press releases, the announcements of everyday government existence, the “what.” Strategic is the story you're telling about the “why.”

The former need not concern us. Anyone with a reasonably professional approach can do it. And it has its place. However, where true political skill lies is in mastery of the strategic.

Government Leaders need a narrative, one that explains why you are, and why you deserve to be, in government; something that expresses not only what you're doing but also the values, sentiments and motives behind doing it.

This narrative is important at any time, but especially important for the change-maker. It sets out why you are challenging the status quo, why you might be asking people to accept difficult things—things that will make you opponents as well as friends. It tells a story, not simply a collection of facts or more often claims.

I liken governing to leading people on a journey. You don't just begin by stepping out. You begin with a description of a destination—the house on the hill, you might call it. And you tell the people: that's where we're heading because in that house are many good things, things that will improve and enrich our lives, make the journey worth it.

It's vital to describe the destination because the journey is not going to be easy: there will be obstacles and dangers and pitfalls and diversions that shake people's faith and make them wonder why they embarked on it in the first place.

Think of Moses and the Exodus from Egypt. You might have thought that since he was leading his people out of slavery and oppression, they would have been perpetually grateful. But they weren't. They complained bitterly much of the time. They dissented. They rebelled. They frequently averred that they would have been better off if he had just left them where they were. The waters of Meribah (when Moses struck the rock to bring forth water after the quarrelling of the people about his leadership) were as vivid for them as the parting of the Red Sea.

Moses had to put up with the “stiff-necked” attitude of the people. But he also countered it by continually explaining that he was leading them to a land of “milk and honey” where their every need would be better fulfilled. Of course, he got a bit of help from God, who sent manna from heaven. Unfortunately, that's not something your everyday Leader can rely on.

What all this means for the modern Leader is that every time their government is announcing something significant, it must announce the “why” and not just the “what.” Strategic communications is like a washing line running the length of the government—as my colleague Peter Mandelson used to say. Each individual policy or initiative must be attached to the line like an item of clothing.

That line is the narrative. And it must be carefully constructed. If it is weak, or inadequate, if it frays easily, or is poorly attached to firm poles of conviction and understanding, then very soon the government appears to the

people as if it's not so much striding towards a destination as merely walking round in circles.

The importance of narrative can be well illustrated by considering the countries that joined the European Union after the fall of the Berlin Wall. All of them were former Communist states. All of them therefore had non-existent or inefficient private sectors, bloated public sectors, and little or no experience of governing in a culture of democracy.

Poland and Ukraine were at that time two broadly comparable countries, with roughly the same prospects in a post-Communist world. But fast-forward to 2021—before the war in Ukraine—and the contrast had become stark. In the thirty years or so after 1989, Poland had become prosperous and vibrant. Many of its people, who for the first couple of decades after the break-up of the Soviet Union had moved to other parts of Europe in search of jobs and prosperity, started to return to a country where there was now a clear opportunity to get on.

Ukraine, by contrast, had been beset by constant problems of politics and governance and fallen significantly behind its neighbour.

The difference in the two countries' fortunes could be measured in average earnings: in 2021, incomes in Poland were around twice those in Ukraine. Sure, Poland has experienced well-documented challenges in its democracy. Some Poles, I'm sure, would dispute the generally rosy picture I paint. But by any objective standards the last decades have been good for Poland and disappointing for Ukraine.

Poland succeeded, in large part, because the prospect and then reality of membership of the European Union gave its political leadership a visible and attractive "house on the hill." It was the same prospect for many other Eastern European states. People could see the journey, with all its challenges, was worth the effort.

All the countries had to prove eligibility for membership by implementing reform programmes. These meant huge and often painful changes to the status quo, but the leadership was able to convince the people that the benefits outweighed the costs.

Today, countries like Albania that are queuing up to join the EU use the same story to drive the reform that is required to gain membership. After the war, Ukraine—if it gets a clear path to European Union membership—will, with the right leadership, move much faster towards the changes which eluded it while Poland was advancing.

All countries need a story. Sometimes it isn't as plain as that of Poland. But the principle is the same.

When I first ran for office in 1997, we had a slogan: New Labour, New Britain. It was straightforward, uncomplicated and got across the message we wanted to convey. After four election defeats in a row, my party had learnt its lesson and had changed. Britain as it approached a new century with a stale old establishment in power needed renewal also. We were the people who had modernised our party and would modernise the country.

Not everyone liked the slogan. Some hated it. But no one misunderstood it.

Today, across the Middle East, the countries making most progress are those with Leaders who send a clear message to their own people of a positive vision for the future of their country, even if it is not a democracy. Those countries driving modernisation across the region are succeeding, in part because each leadership's communication with its own people is clear: we're on a journey of change because our youth can't be held back by introspective culture but need to be connected to the world; and our economy must diversify because dependence on fossil fuel is no longer wise or acceptable. Our enemy is extremism; our ally is tolerance.

Their narrative is one of unashamed modernisation. It places religious belief in an individual and social setting, not a political one, rejecting the use of religion as political ideology. It embraces technology as a route to economic diversification but also connectivity. It is easy to understand and easy to convey.

In some African countries today Leaders are striking out with a new narrative which, in time, will be very effective: let's stop debating the colonial past, let's set aside the dependence on Western largesse and aid,

and instead let's stand on our own two feet, adding value to the commodities we have in abundance, leapfrogging the Western legacy systems through the use of technology, and sorting out the corruption which holds us back. It's a narrative of independence, of self-reliance, of taking responsibility for your future, not leaving it to the generosity of others, which is never large or reliable enough. And it will chime with a young population on their smartphones.

The challenge of Western democracy at present is the lack of a clear narrative. We want to return to high levels of growth and rising living standards, but it is not clear how. We know the geopolitics of the world is changing and Western powers will no longer be in sole command, but we're not sure where that leaves us.

We have to recover a sense of mission which, to my mind, will be focused on harnessing the twenty-first-century technological revolution; and to revive confidence in democracy by showing it can deliver not only for us but for the developing world.

But, for these purposes, the point is simply to emphasise that the absence of the narrative creates a situation where necessary reform is harder and leadership seems to drift, uncertain of destination or a path to it.

When working with governments round the world, one of the first things my institute does is to help them craft their narrative. This needs careful thought.

The narrative must be strong enough to endure and be robust. It has to be one the Leader's supporters believe in and share. It must be capable of being expressed in plain language, not fancy political speak. It can't be loose or fuzzy. Simplicity is a virtue. There may be all manner of complexity behind it, and buttressing it, but the narrative itself has to be easy to grasp.

Once that narrative has been created, it's not enough for the Leader to carry the burden of communicating it on their own. They must get everyone in the government ranks to do so. Every minister, every person speaking on behalf of the government, must get it and do it.

A minister has an announcement to make. Ensure that when they announce, they explain: this is what we're doing, and this is why we're doing it. Here's the problem, and here's the solution.

If this happens, it doesn't make the opposition to reform or change disappear, but it does force it to respond to the narrative and not just to the announcement. If you make the case for "why," they are obliged to explain "why not."

The clarity of narrative is even more important in the era of social media. But in the end, social media won't decide whether you win or lose. Delivery will. Especially if connected to a strong story about not just what you have done or will do in government, but why.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

How to Handle Criticism, Twenty-first-Century Style

How many “normal” politicians can you think of? No, seriously. How many come across as well adjusted, essentially grounded, individuals, who behave and act like the people you want to spend time with, would go to for personal advice, would trust with your inner secrets?

Not many and, increasingly, not many at all near the top.

Politicians have, of course, always invited criticism. Read some of the things said about Abraham Lincoln during his presidential campaign or Churchill during his long estrangement from the British establishment in the 1930s. Or amuse yourself by reading the coffee-shop literature in the time of the early-eighteenth-century English essayist Joseph Addison—scurrilous, defamatory, abusive and unreasonable.

But our era has seen criticism taken to a whole new level. The prevalence and reach of media—social and conventional—has turned it into a weapon of psychological warfare, a bludgeon, a brutal, merciless source of persecution. Criticism is now not the simple making of an unfavourable judgement or an unforgiving analysis of error, presumed or real. It has become a sort of contest for attention, where reflective javelin-throwers, who take the time to ensure their projectiles are carefully smoothed and weighted for accuracy in flight, are outcompeted by those who hurl rough-hewed, nasty, hastily assembled javelins of disapproval, that go higher and faster, targeting anything in their path, and more likely to get noticed by onlookers.

It is true that one benefit of the media fragmentation we have witnessed over the past few years is that new forms of intelligent engagement can enter the lists. Podcasts, for example, have on the whole proved themselves to be a reasonable medium for reasonable people. But such enterprises have been swamped in scale by the noisy clatter of the shrill and the shrieking.

The risk for politics is substantial. “Normal” folk like neither to give nor to receive such blows aimed at destroying peace of mind, provoking deepest concealed insecurities, ruining the individual’s capacity to think straight or at least consistently and clearly. Criticism “gets” them. Why wouldn’t it? You’re normal. If people are unpleasant to you, you feel it. It hurts. It gnaws away. It distracts and deters. If you think you’re being unfairly castigated—and you often are in politics—that dampens and dismays your spirit. Unless you are possessed of extraordinary courage, you think twice before stepping forward.

All too often, therefore, the political arena these days is left to the chronically insensitive and the populists. Both groups are of the unusual character that gains some strange form of sustenance from abuse, that covets it. They know it stimulates in their own supporters the necessary feeling of being under siege, a feeling that then boosts the populists’ sway over them, and protects them against charges both justified and unjustified.

For those not so constituted, but who are sufficiently excited and motivated to make political leadership their goal, the only solution is to grow a mental carapace, a shell inside which you can achieve a Zen-like meditative state. That doesn’t mean you’re ignoring the criticism that comes your way—you can’t—or that you refuse to acknowledge its existence—you won’t—but you’re able to view it from a zone of detachment.

I once asked the former prime minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew how he coped with stress. I rather expected him—being the sort of tough, no-nonsense Leader he was—to give me a suitably dismissive “buck yourself up” response. Instead, he told me that as he had grown older, he had embarked on a programme of meditation and that he had found it

immeasurably useful. On talking to other Leaders, I found the use of meditation among them surprisingly common.

I myself came to it late in life, and even now I am not sure that, according to the strict definition of the term, I do meditate. But I think I do. For me, it is just a quiet time, a time of letting go all negative thoughts, a moment of appreciation of your smallness and insignificance in the grand scheme of things, but not in your own life or in the lives of those near and dear to you.

It's during that time that I recall the words of Niebuhr's Serenity Prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Some versions ascribed to his pupil Winnifred Wygal put courage first and serenity second and that is probably the correct order. But for these purposes it is important to note what cannot be changed. And today, that is the weight and nastiness of criticism.

Or at least it can't be changed by you.

It is always a difficult decision as to how far to counter it directly. At one level you want to correct something which is untrue or unfair. On another, you draw attention to the criticism by attacking it, and rebuttal takes time. It is possible you can be right and wrong at the same time.

I have concluded that in the end it's better to treat criticism like sharing a home, which you neither own nor can escape from, with a psychopath, who you are unable to remove. You are ever-mindful of his presence. At times—hopefully, as few as possible—you will have to drop what you're doing and concentrate on what he's up to. But once you accept that he won't leave and you can't escape, you find a way to go about your business, knowing that he may be part of your life but that he is not going to define it.

Now you may say, and many do: what the hell! I don't choose to enter this house at all. Let someone else live with the psychopath. Unfortunately, the house and its unwelcome occupant come with the territory. And the business you want to conduct, which means a lot to you, which bestows

purpose in your life, can only be done from that home with that companion in residence.

So, you accept the unavoidable. You construct your mental defences. You discipline yourself not to keep barging into his room to find out what he's doing or saying.

If you come across something unpleasant or cruel that has been written about you: DON'T READ IT! If it's a horrible headline, ignore it. If it's an awful article, don't look at it. And if you're unwise enough to peruse it, don't glance at the "comments" that follow!

None of this means that you shouldn't listen to sensible and serious criticism. You should. You can learn from it. But you won't learn anything from the stuff that's vomiting forth, that's written for clicks, that delights in its nastiness, that takes pleasure in the hope it is inflicting pain. And if you let it get to you, then you have lost, and "they"—whoever at any given time "they" may be—have won.

Treat the handling of criticism not as about the receiving of a blow, but as the willingness to be knocked down by it. See refusal and defiance as victories. Because they are.

And understand one thing, which I say constantly to the Leaders I work with and say often to myself: it matters less than you think. It defines you less than you fear. And, despite its vehemence, it lasts a shorter time than you thought possible. Remember, too, that the type of person who says or writes hurtful things, or who makes outsize claims or devotes energy to the expression of hate, has a problem less with you than with themselves.

In the end, however you choose to rationalise it, you do have to rationalise it, because otherwise you will lose effectiveness as a Leader. You will start to obsess about the criticism you receive, worry about it even though you know you shouldn't, and you'll despise yourself for letting it get to you. Absolutely nothing good can come of being drawn into its grasp.

I know it's not easy. I went from being enormously popular to being—according to all my critics and a few of my friends—very unpopular. It

wasn't a great trajectory. But I knew that every moment I spent thinking or worrying about it would be a wasted moment.

I am tempted to resort to the cliché about “the price of fame.” Like many clichés it is essentially true (which is why it became a cliché). Today that price is higher than ever for anyone in the public eye, from politicians to artists. Even those whose sole ambition and purpose in life is to become a celebrity all too often find that the initial warm glow of fame turns into a furnace.

So, if criticism distresses you, make a judgement about your capacity to cope with it. And if you think you can't, don't put yourself in a métier where it is inevitable.

By the same token, recognise that if what you're doing really matters to you and is something you're passionate about, you mustn't let the criticism or the anxiety it gives rise to stop you from pursuit of the thing you care about.

Realise, too, that judgements change, perspectives alter and that what seems anchored in the thickest of seabeds, time, circumstance and even serendipity can dislodge and bring to a different resting place.

So, this challenge for a Leader has to be faced. Think of it as a knotty problem you are obliged to solve. Objectivise it. Come to an understanding about it.

Otherwise, that psychopath will find you wandering aimlessly around the house, fretting, will sense weakness and will destroy you.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Scandal

All governments suffer scandals of one sort or another. In a dictatorship, they can be covered up—usually. In a democracy, as they gain traction, they can eat up huge amounts of energy, distract and distort the agenda of government, and leave the Leader frustrated and drained.

It's important to make a distinction here. Yes, scandals can arise that are the genuine article: scandals that uncover wrongdoing at the heart of the leadership, that put at risk the Leader and the whole government, and that can and often should result in their political demise. But for every one of those, there are fifty manufactured—at core trivial—or grossly exaggerated ones. They can't be ignored, since they have an impact on public opinion and the fortunes of the Leader; they have to be managed, but the Leader cannot afford to be obsessed with them.

When I was prime minister I lost count of scandals that fell into this second category. Some did have a germ of something in them. Some arose from misunderstandings that came to be represented as malfeasance. Some were literally confected out of nothing. All of them at the time consumed attention and focus that could have been directed more productively elsewhere.

And here's the thing. Once I left office, those scandals, which had loomed so large when I was in power, faded; and what remained from my tenure as Leader were actual achievements or failures. In other words, the sense of perspective that had been so singularly lacking during the time scandal predominated curiously reasserted itself once I had departed. The experience is an important one to share, because it should encourage

Leaders dealing with a scandal not to fall into the trap of becoming so obsessed with it that managing it obliterates the task of governing.

When you are in the eye of the storm—particularly when, as in Britain, the media is going into full attack mode—you believe the world is collapsing around you. Your obsession becomes even more pronounced if you consider the scandal more invented than real, because then a sense of injustice enters the mix.

But you have to remember that, provided what is facing you doesn't fall into the category of the full-blown, genuine, life-threatening scandal, it matters much less than you reckon it does. Of course, it will take its toll. You can't pretend it won't. But you need to remind yourself that just as the "scandal" itself is exaggerated, so you might be exaggerating its potential consequences, not least because the public care less, focus less, are interested less in what is going on in politics than you think.

Put another way: if, on an objective basis, the scandal isn't life-threatening, then it's unlikely to kill you.

That said, you still have to manage scandals when they arise. They come in all shapes and sizes. Often they involve ministers doing something wrong or stupid or both—financially, sexually, morally. Sometimes they are caused by misleading statements unintentionally made that then seem like "lies." On occasion they arise from the insensitive handling of a sensitive issue. They can be a tiny cloud on the horizon that without warning becomes a black sheet blocking the blue sky.

However they start, and whatever course they take, they will temporarily overwhelm the normal business of government and create a sense of crisis. They therefore demand the attention of the Leader.

While I was in office I learnt a number of lessons about managing scandals—generally by error.

First and foremost among these was the fundamental importance of establishing the facts before going into action. That seems obvious? Not really. A story appears. Maybe you don't fully appreciate its gravity. You speak before you know the facts and then learn too late that you have got

them wrong. Now you're in full-scale and undignified retreat with, naturally, everyone assuming you knew all along. Before you utter a word, therefore, it's essential to get someone you trust to get you the facts. They may be the facts you prefer weren't the facts. But it's better to deal with the uncomfortable truth than pivot from a comfortable untruth.

The second lesson I learnt was that once I had established what was actually going on, I needed to decide the ground I was going to camp on. This is an important general lesson across a range of different challenges of government and almost deserves its own chapter. What it means in this context is that you need to work out your side of the story—your explanation, rebuttal, justification, whatever—in a way that you can hold to. That then becomes the ground you camp on.

All too often, Leaders, in their panic, choose the easiest or superficially most advantageous ground. This is fatal. It turns a scandal from one that can be managed into a new scandal about the original scandal, evoking the old cliché about the cover-up being worse than the deed being covered up.

A recent example in the UK is the scandal that came to be known as Partygate, involving an allegation that, contrary to the rules then in place to limit social contact during the Covid lockdown, those at the very centre of government in Downing Street were holding parties at which they mixed freely. Such a scandal would have been serious in any set of circumstances. It smelt of hypocrisy. A contempt of the governing elite for the governed. A sense of one rule for them, another rule for us. Certainly, a technical breach of the law. A long charge list. The way it was handled, though, turned it from a scandal to a crisis that threatened to bring down the prime minister, Boris Johnson.

Johnson failed to establish stable ground to camp on. Instead, he went straight out and flatly denied that any such parties had been held. Cue the inevitable production of large numbers of photographs showing people at Downing Street drinking together. Result: an even worse scandal as broken rules became accompanied by lies.

Holding parties and gatherings at Downing Street was certainly an extraordinary error of judgement. The rules at the time prohibited people mixing and congregating. They were a public health requirement for public protection, to limit the amount of social intercourse and so the spread of Covid.

What the staff in Downing Street were doing was technically illegal. They were, however, mixing together because they were fighting the virus and needed to stay at work. Whether they drank coffee or alcohol, were in the garden or in the Cabinet room or their office, made no difference. They were in each other's company by necessity. Yes, they were not following the same rules as the public, but this was inevitable. The rules for the public about parties were there to prevent people who weren't in contact with each other initiating that contact. It wasn't to do with the activity but the congregation. So, of course, adherence to the rules concerning parties for the general public would not have the same practical effect on spreading the disease as for those mandated to work together.

Had the prime minister admitted the parties, the fact they breached Covid rules, the error of judgement involved in allowing them, but explained the context, there would still have been a scandal for sure. But it would have been, though horrible, manageable rather than becoming job-threatening.

If it's essential to establish the best ground to camp on, it is advisable—when the scandal is complex or the facts unclear—to play for time. You need to make sure that everything is properly investigated internally before it's defended or dealt with externally.

Be careful, in playing for time, however, not always to default to holding an inquiry. Public inquiries have their place, especially when they deal with important subjects not being debated in the heat of contemporary politics. The 2010 Saville Inquiry into the 1972 shooting of twenty-six unarmed protesters by British soldiers in Derry on “Bloody Sunday,” which was in essence part of the Northern Ireland peace process, is a good example.

But when the inquiry is one involving a hot political topic of real and sustained political controversy, and especially where it either is or becomes a full-blown statutory inquiry, tread very cautiously. Otherwise, a day's OK publicity for the announcement of the inquiry is then followed by months or more likely years of pain, without contributing much to the understanding of the topic under investigation.

The problem with an inquiry is that it can develop its own momentum, and the person conducting it, even if of a strong character, comes under intense pressure to find fault. Those in the media bluntly have no interest in a finding of innocence. They want someone to be found guilty. And if they sense that the person in charge of inquiring is wavering, they have ways of making them fall in line—their line.

Finally, as I learnt over time, never forget that the scandal is your problem, but it's not your job. Your job is governing, and people need to see that that is what you are focusing upon, and that—whatever controversies may be swirling around you—you're still out there talking about the things which matter to them. President Clinton did this brilliantly while he was going through his impeachment ordeal. Anyone else might have been consumed by the scandal, but he was still getting on with the job. No doubt a large part of his mind was occupied by it, but not the part of his mind the public was seeing.

One final, final point. Be mindful when in opposition of making too much of too little when it comes to scandal. It can be a boomerang, causing welcome damage on the way out, but inflicting harm on the thrower on the way back.

There will be scandal. Don't think for a moment there won't, no matter how squeaky clean you think you are. There is too much going on in government, too many actors involved in the performance, too much scrutiny from too many critical eyes to avoid it.

But keep it in its place.

CHAPTER THIRTY

Politics in the Era of Social Media

We live in a new era of media. Conventional and social. And to be fair, it has its strong upside. Social media does give people the opportunity to communicate directly. It can be an antibiotic to poisonous material as well as spreading it. It does indeed offer a voice to communities which may live in political systems that don't allow independent voices. People use it. They do so because they like it. And for some, it has opened up new life possibilities and avenues of perfectly legitimate experience and adventure. This much is obvious.

However, to state something else obvious, it has its downside and, for sure, has completely altered the way political debate is conducted in ways which can be deeply destabilising and discomfiting for politicians. It is angry. Often unfair. Frequently misguided or misdirected. Inaccurate. Distorting. Both worthy of being ignored and impossible to ignore.

Social media has given birth to the era of the loudmouth. And while it's always been the case that those who shout loudest don't necessarily deserve to be heard most, when it comes to politics on social media platforms, shouting loudly seems to be the behaviour of choice for many.

I used to hold the naive view that social media might help to make conventional media more objective, by being an alternative for those searching for facts separated from commentary. Wow. Definitely got that wrong!

Precisely the opposite has occurred. Social media is itself highly partisan, with information, and judgements about what that information means, conflated, usually in a deliberately provocative way. At the same

time, partly through social media, technology has created a wide diversification of the media but therefore also a much more competitive environment for the traditional news outlets.

The effect on conventional media has been to make it compete, compete on clicks, compete on outrage, compete on what catches your emotion rather than your reason. As this has happened, it has fragmented, seeing its commercial survival as dependent on garnering a constituency which is best retained by playing to already formed opinions and stirring them. The consequence is that a sharp grievance politics subsumes rational consideration of difficult choices.

Both social and conventional media then combine to create echo chambers of opinion, where instead of people learning about the other point of view, the view they had already is reinforced.

On social media, threads of political or other statements, even if based on one foundational fact which happens to be untrue, run riot.

The strength of an opinion is often in inverse proportion to the knowledge of the person holding it.

“The people have a voice” is a commonly expressed sentiment in favour of social media. Unfortunately, that means all the people, including the crazy ones. The people you might notice at the end of the bar droning away and could avoid, now pop up in your face.

Seeing things written there on screen has a curious effect. The people writing feel a sense of power; and the people reading it or who are the objects of it—often hateful stuff—feel that power irrespective of the validity/accuracy of what is written.

Conspiracy theories are one element. But in a way, those, even if annoying, are easily discounted. The conspiracy theorists are a niche group, and mostly a threat to themselves—though it is alarming to note how any theory, no matter how bonkers, can accumulate an audience which runs into the thousands and hundreds of thousands. If 1 per cent of the British population is off their head, it seems small as a percentage. But mathematically it’s 650,000 people. Which rather changes the feel of it.

Much worse and more worrying, however, are the campaigns around issues led by opinion-formers who aren't inventing things but "one-siding" them. You take an international dispute and just present one side's version, usually heavily biased and distorted. That then, if followed by enough people, creates anger around the issue, makes compromise harder, inflames rather than informs.

Or there is the lambasting of statements people have made, by misrepresenting what they said or ignoring the context in which they have said it or giving one half of the statement and not the other, which results in imbalance.

Then, of course, there is the direct use of social media by foreign governments interfering with the internal politics of a country. This is now highly visible in Western democracies, where at least it can be exposed and therefore its impact somewhat limited, though there will at some point and not too far away be a necessity to examine how regulation might prevent or deter this practice. But it is hugely serious in places like the Sahel in Africa where campaigns of disinformation have helped destroy democratic government and engender hostility in local populations, particularly in respect of France as a former colonial power.

And to top it off, social media is a place where vitriol and venom are the sauce flavouring whatever opinion is being given vent to. Elected politicians are subject to degrees of unpleasantness, rudeness and verbal violence that are both shameful and unfortunately quite commonplace.

The cumulative effect is a background against which serious political debate, the exchange of views, the willingness to dispute without demonising, the pursuit of the right not the easy answer, becomes much tougher.

That's a rough world in which to try to argue for ideas, policies and plans.

And yet those characteristics of public discourse are important for a Leader trying to communicate with the people they serve.

Yes, it has its positive side. But overall, there will come a time when its effects are recognised as so consequential for political debate and democracy that it will need much more assertive regulation than currently exists.

In any event, it is a fact of political life and has to be mastered by a Leader in the modern age.

There are people much more expert than me to advise on how to do it. My concern is rather to make sure the Leader recognises social media's power and its effect without getting mesmerised into thinking it alters the basic rules of politics, because it doesn't.

There are two things to remember about it. First, the public reads it, creates it, but also has an innate sense that the description I have just given of it is essentially true. Therefore, they buffet politicians with it, and at the same time want politicians to be strong enough to withstand it and treat it with the respect it deserves—which is often not much.

Never underestimate the degree to which people crave leadership. Back to Moses again. The Israelites simultaneously hated and craved his leadership. If you remember, they reached the promised land (though, yes, I know, he didn't).

In the social media world, strength as a political Leader, always important, becomes even more so. The worst the people can think of you as a Leader is that you are bullied—or bulliable, if there is such a word. Even some of those who agree with the criticism being made don't want to see you bend. The more ferocious the onslaught, the more the reward for staying upright.

Surf the wave of every passing current of Twitter opinion, and you may enjoy spasmodic popularity, but you will ultimately be disregarded as a Leader. People want a sense not that someone is indifferent to what social media is saying—it can be revealing an important truth—but that you as a Leader are prepared to be the rock on which the wave breaks, not be swept away by it.

The second point to bear in mind is that while social media intensifies and complicates the business of communication, it doesn't alter its fundamentals. If anything, it makes them even more important. The narrative needs to be even stronger. The sense of purpose even more pervasive. The ability to fight your way through the garbage and pull out the gem even more critical.

Your response has to be that you become ever more savvy and capable. You don't circumvent social media. You utilise it. It is what it is. A pain. Super irritating. Enraging. But only you can decide the degree to which it is a distraction.

PART VII

You the Leader

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

Avoid Paranoia, Even Though They Are Out to Get You

You got there. You are the Leader. You won! Which means others didn't. Leadership breeds resentment with infallible impregnation. Rivals want your position. People who knew you when you were nothing may be happy if they like you, but will certainly be jealous if they don't. And as we have seen, since the Leader is on a continual fast-moving decision treadmill, any decisions taken will themselves create an almost unlimited potential for resentment, discord or even just plain old-fashioned principled opposition.

So, from the moment you reach the top of the pole, there are tribes of people trying to pull you down from it. It is natural. And accepting that it is natural is an important part of inhabiting the right zone of temperament when it comes to doing the job. Pulling you down may even be reasonable—though accepting that is obviously hard for any Leader. There comes a moment when it is right that you go. You have been there too long; lost your way in terms of the agenda; forfeited for some reason the support of the public; become a liability even if, once, you were a saviour.

Therefore, pretty much from the outset, they are, in a sense, out to get you. Sometimes wrongly; sometimes rightly. And the chances are that you didn't get to be Leader without some form of struggle. Unsurprisingly, you want to stay there or at least choose the time of your departure. You're probably not the type of person who goes gently. That's not a quality you exhibited on the way up, and it's unlikely you develop it on the way down.

You want to survive for the usual mix of the principled and the personal. And so you have to deal with the contenders, the pretenders and

the offenders.

All of the above leads to a high potential for paranoia. And that is emphatically bad. Bad for the government, bad for decision-making and ultimately bad for you. It seeps in, and then it drains you of focus and energy.

And it takes many forms. Stuff appears in the media. Someone has briefed something. It may be untrue, a distortion or just generally unhelpful. Who leaked it? Who briefed? Why? I see Leaders who spend hours trying to work it out. Their staff are just as bad. Was it one of us who did it? Who has been talking to whom? Which journalists have been seen with which official?

All that speculation is nearly always pointless. You don't know. You may suspect wrongly. It can be harmful, too: the very act of enquiry creates an atmosphere of suspicion. Choose your staff well, people you trust. That is the only sure way to avoid the irritating breaches. Moreover, speculation is a distraction: every moment you waste on worrying who is behind a disobliging story is a moment not spent on the real-life challenges directly in front of you.

Social media has, of course, taken all this to a new level. Here, conspiracy theories run amok. When you're the Leader you become the target of them. Some of the conspiracies are said to be against you, and some initiated by you. It's a truly crazy world out there. But you can't let it all divert you or induce in you paranoia about why they're doing it or how you counter it. I am not saying you don't have to answer things that are being said and are untrue, but you need to do it quickly and then move on. You should not obsess about why it's happening, what's really behind it, who's really behind it.

Don't let your concerns and anxieties poison important working relationships. They should be maintained even if you believe that some of those you work with do indeed want your position and seek it. Acting contrary to the interests of the government or deliberately undermining the

Leader is wrong; ambition for the top job is not. Learn to tell the difference. Or at least acknowledge there is a difference.

I had this conversation frequently when I was prime minister because—as is widely known—Gordon Brown, who was my Chancellor of the Exchequer and thus a vital cog in the government wheel, aspired to succeed me, and sooner rather than later. My folk understandably didn't like this. I used to say, he's entitled to want the job.

In my post-Downing Street years, I have spent a lot of time in the Middle East and in the Arab world, where wild stuff spreads across the media like a forest fire. I have seen Leaders become fixated by it. It's never helpful.

In general, politics is much more cock-up than conspiracy, but conspiracy is so much more exciting that it almost invariably takes over. I myself am constantly reading about plots that I'm supposed to be involved in to overturn particular regimes—as if I would have the means, let alone the inclination. There are dark theories as to intentions and motivations. I have so regularly been the subject of conspiracy theories, in fact, that I have just grown to live with them.

When I was prime minister, I had to deal with innumerable conspiracy theories arising out of the tragic death of Princess Diana. To this day, there are those who are convinced it was part of some nefarious Secret Service plot. It's all complete nonsense, of course; all driven by a paranoid belief that there has to be a deeply concealed reason for such a terrible and unexpected event.

The conspiracy theories about Princess Diana's death also exemplify the belief some people have in the existence of the deep state—a belief that generates a whole encyclopedia of paranoia of its own. Like so many of the worst paranoia creations, there's just enough truth to it to fuel it. In most countries, there are indeed institutions that over time develop views, attitudes and positions that become relatively embedded and remain constant through changes of government. The institutions act in accordance with those embedded principles unless redirected; and occasionally, if they

feel very strongly about something, they will resist redirection. So, superficially, the government has one policy; but underneath, down deep, the system has another.

In democracies the deep state is highly constrained. In undemocratic countries, much less so. In both cases, Leaders should avoid exaggerated assumptions about the power such “hidden” forces have to thwart or to instigate.

In established democracies, in my experience, most officials are averse to frustrating deliberately the work of an elected government—or doing anything the media, which adores a conspiracy, might find occasion to sink its teeth into. Their greatest anxiety—and this is true even, and sometimes especially, of those in such institutions as the intelligence services—is that they will get caught up in some political shenanigans and then be summoned in front of inquiries, committees and commissions and be criticised.

There will be occasions where “the system” will conceal or close ranks around a difficulty or a scandal. But that is usually in pursuance of a mistaken desire for self-preservation rather than some malevolent hidden hand trying to destroy legitimate government.

Some nations—Pakistan, for example—do have a deep state that can pose genuine problems for a democratically elected Leader; and developing countries on the whole have a larger challenge than developed ones. But even here, not everything is the product of deep state policy, and where it is and where it is contrary to the policy of the democratically elected government, it can be confronted and changed. As for countries that are not democracies, the chances are it’s the Leader who is controlling the state, not the state the Leader.

If the paranoia induced by fear of a conspiracy is corrosive, so is the influence of the “whisperers” who surround the Leader. These may be staff, colleagues in government, friends, or just those wanting to exhibit some special knowledge. They may be people who love to be bearers of tittle-tattle dressed up as news, or conveyors of things the Leader “really should

know.” Some genuinely want to protect, some are looking to prove their utility or hoping to gain an advantage. All should be avoided. They sow the seeds of doubt and thus of paranoia.

How many times must it be stressed that Leaders are human? We all listen to gossip. We all incline an ear to someone telling us something that concerns us, especially if it is something that plays on our fears and stimulates our inner insecurities. How many times must it be repeated that an ability to resist such tendencies is an integral part of leadership?

Watch the whisperers. They’re lethal.

Having said all that, one final point should be made, or any Leader reading this will think my advice hopelessly naive (and naivety is definitely not sensible in politics). Sometimes it becomes clear there really is a plot and they really are out to get you!

If that’s the case, then act. Sort it—ruthlessly, if necessary.

The rest of the time don’t imagine it, don’t spend valuable governing time searching for it, and as ever in leadership, deal with it with cool detachment.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

The Hinterland

Emotionally, leadership is a bundle of contradictions. Leadership is lonely. Leadership is voluntary. It is an extraordinarily tough job to be Leader. You fought hard to get the job. You have power. You have responsibility. You may exult in the one, and be intimidated by the other. You may want everyone to be your friend. Yet you know you are going to make many enemies. You're famous, but also infamous. You're a celebrity and people want to take photos and selfies with you but, unlike other celebrities, you're also a decision-maker over their lives.

You're liked and resented in varying proportions, and that mirrors in a way what you feel about being Leader. You like the power and the ability therefore to change things. But you resent how your motives are sometimes misconstrued, and you are frustrated by your incapacity to please the people when you're trying to do your best for them.

There is excitement; on good days fulfilment. But there is stress; and the days of frustration and disappointment are frequent. And all the time the relentless spotlight is casting its beam not only on your job, but on your life, your character, your family, your friends. The people who are unforgiving of your mistakes and who delight more in your failure than your success. Those who are careless of the consequences on you as a person, because in the role of Leader, you cease in a sense to be a human, you're a power, unreachable by ordinary people and therefore, because of the entitlement which power gives you, disentitled to sympathy.

But as my wife always said to me when I complained—usually about some media barb or attack—“No one makes you do it; if you don't like it,

you can leave; and if you're not leaving we have to assume you like it more than you hate it."

When you reflect on the awesome nature of the responsibility, you do, or at least I did, shudder a little. It weighs on you mightily, and frankly, if it doesn't, you shouldn't be there.

The pressure and stress are real. To survive you have to create a coping mechanism. Some of it comes from possessing the right temperament, a very important quality in leadership: the ability to rise above, to keep calm when the situation is the opposite of calm, to have that little touch of Zen, that exuding of confidence externally, whatever the battering tremors roiling your insides. Such a temperament is vital because, apart from anything else, if the Leader starts to look panicky, the team and system collapse, shredding discipline and efficacy as they do so.

I was incredibly lucky in my core team—exceptionally talented and exceptionally brave. At moments of crisis, they would stand up when others would sit back, march towards the gunfire, and take an almost perverse pleasure in doing so. But even with that team, who knew me well and were at the top of their game, I knew as Leader I had to have my best face on, whatever might lurk unseen behind it.

A resilient temperament is a natural gift. And some have more of it than others.

But a hinterland can support it, replenish it, even grow it.

It was Denis Healey, the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1970s, or it may have been his indomitable life partner Edna, who described the secret of his success in politics as having a "hinterland." By this, he meant having dimensions to your life which were not about politics, but about culture, art, a hobby, a passion nothing to do with political ambition; a place, mentally or physically, of rest, relaxation, leisure or pleasure. For Denis, it was poetry, music and, in later times, farming.

When I was prime minister, I played the guitar, even if only for a few moments, virtually every day. I would read, always with two books on the go, usually one about history, and the other maybe a thriller. I would watch

movies, particularly the classics. I would try to learn about something of which I was ignorant: art, painting and pottery, or science—one of my deepest life regrets being that I never studied science properly at school and have ever since felt the absence of basic scientific knowledge a disadvantage.

Friends are important. Real friends. Preferably those you knew before you were ever anybody: friends from school, university, from when your kids were young. Of course, even with those, you never escape political discussion and they can't help but be interested in what you're doing. But you feel confidence in their company. You know you can be off guard, without risk. There is trust. With your political friends, however close, it's not that you don't trust them, but that they're mixing in other highly political and media circles and that they cannot but reflect something of what you're saying to them in what they're saying to others. So, the risk of indiscretion is there, even if unintentional.

The “friends” you have to be very cautious about are those who arrive as you arrive in power. One of the most important lessons I learnt as a Leader is that you mustn't fool yourself when you're apparently surrounded by people being respectful to you, deferential even, who tell you how remarkable you are, who appear to be supportive of your every move, professing their loyalty and your under-appreciated genius, seeming to embrace you when they are really embracing your power.

Don't be so cautious you overlook the ones who will still be there years later—and I have had a few. But be realistic enough to know that most are there for self-interest. Not an unconscionable reason, but one which should make you wary.

This can happen with people from outside politics and the system; and it can happen with people within it. I lost count of the number of ministers who, after I made them ex-ministers, discovered not just what an awful Leader but person I was, when I promise you as ministers they would marvel openly at my brilliance and integrity. There were civil servants who

I genuinely thought admired and liked me, who, it turned out, invariably after I relinquished power, in fact thought I was an unprincipled airhead.

You could become somewhat jaundiced about human nature because of such people if it weren't for the others, the decent ones, who said what they meant, meant what they said, and would stand by you even when the going was horrible.

So, friends are an important part of the hinterland, but choose them carefully and realise the newer they are the more care should be exercised.

And then, naturally, there is the family. I found having teenage children with me in Downing Street an absolute blessing. Teenage children are of course commonly a nightmare. We had our share of those (but good news, parents currently of teenagers, they improve!), with sometimes quite high-profile consequences. And at the end of a highly disturbing and difficult day, you would be forgiven for thinking that the last thing you need is a showdown with a bolshy sixteen-year-old. You would be right, except that the absorbing effect of the showdown curiously displaces the stress of the "torrid day at the office."

Your family is the heart of your hinterland, and you have to make time for them and, most of all, leave some emotional energy for what matters to them. I can say this is exceptionally important because, to my deep regret, I so often failed to do it. But I never regretted or resented the time or energy I did spend, even if it was just sitting down and watching some crazy cartoon with five-year-old Leo. As it happened, and mostly due to Cherie and our helper Jackie, the children turned out fine. But you should never take a risk with family; it is never worth it.

This hinterland of hobbies, interests, friends and family helps you cope. It relieves some of the stress. It keeps your feet on the ground.

But there is a final reason it matters, and it's quite a selfish one: it makes you a better Leader, not only because you're less strung out and exhausted but because, thanks to that, you think more clearly. It normalises you in an environment which is acutely abnormal. You see dimensions that otherwise, immersed in the business of governing, you would be blind to. It

gives you feel and touch, and all those invisible and intangible elements which add up to well-grounded instinct.

Make sure your schedule has time for the hinterland. Have some evenings in the month when you have dinner with people you really want to dine with, where you can relax and, within limits, let your hair down; make some of the weekend like the weekends other people have; be present with your family even if you're somewhat distracted. You can do it!

If the person running your diary cannot provide such moments, get someone else who can.

And if, in the years of climbing to the top, you haven't managed to create a hinterland, do so. It will make you a better Leader of the land you govern.

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

Hubris and Nemesis

The word “hubris” has a bad connotation. Its origins lie in Greek mythology, where it describes those who, though human, believe they are better than gods or, even if gods, show excessive pride or abuse their power. Their arrogance leads to their downfall. Nemesis is the divine retribution for such sinful behaviour that brings about the downfall.

As the Bible has it: “Pride goeth before a fall.” Typically, the British have one word—pride—with two meanings: pride that is arrogance; and pride that is delight in an achievement or in a job well done. The French—more precise—have two words: *orgueil*, which is pride of the sinful sort; and *fierté*, which is pride of the good sort.

I will sometimes sit with Leaders who are riding high in the polls, the political sun is shining, they’re basking in approval, and, perfectly naturally, they’re exuding confidence and an air of general invincibility.

I almost want to grab them by the shoulders and shout: “Beware! Nemesis is right behind you!”

I don’t, of course. I just say: “Well, that’s great, but it may not last, you know.”

Because, usually, it doesn’t. I meet them some time later. The brow is furrowed, the complexion is a few shades more pale and the voice which seemed so strong is a little more quavering.

Nemesis has come in the shape of a crisis, an event, an unforeseen reversal in one form or another, and suddenly the sun is no longer shining.

And, again—usually and in retrospect—the reversal should have been predicted. But hubris prevented it.

Not always. President Jokowi in Indonesia, for example, was more popular at the end of his time than the beginning. But I promise you he's the exception!

When things are going really well, that's the time to worry about what could go really wrong.

Hubris, in its most egregious form, combines overbearing arrogance with malevolence.

But hubris can also stem as much from ignorance as vice. Here the sin lies in the characteristics described in the next chapter—thinking you know more than you do; a belief that you have the power to affect a situation that you can't, or at least not in the way you want; an overly exuberant conviction that you can overcome the odds, however much they may be against you; a faith that by sheer force of conviction you can triumph over an embedded reality.

Sometimes hubris arises from an unpreparedness for the unexpected. Things seem to be going so well that you don't spot the first tremors of upheaval. You're not seeing because you're not looking.

I have learnt over time and by my own mistakes that you should covet a healthy respect for what can go wrong and an equally healthy disrespect for your own or anyone else's infallibility. This sentiment of constant anticipation shouldn't lead to paralysis, but it should lead to circumspection. Because the fact is that the moment hubris takes a grip—even in its most benign form—nemesis is girding up her loins.

I could give numerous examples from my own time in government. I will declare two.

In the year 2000, with a strong lead in the polls, a weak opposition and a happy set of economic statistics, I failed to spot a gathering crisis resulting from an increase in fuel costs caused by a soaring oil price. A random protest blocking the delivery of fuel from what turned out to be an extraordinarily vulnerable and small number of fuel depots on which the

country's petrol supply depended, quickly spiralled into a full-scale nationwide blockade. Within days the nation was grinding to a halt. Very bad.

At the same time, and completely unconnected, because inflation was low (a good thing) and pensions were linked to inflation (in principle, a sensible policy) we announced a risibly small pension increase. Resulting in very upset pensioners.

The two issues came together in a burst of disaffection at the government. The political scene became deeply fraught. We dropped 10 points in the polls. The opposition drew ahead for the only time in that parliamentary term. And what had seemed uninterrupted sunny weather just a few days before turned into a very nasty thunderstorm.

I had not made the connections I should have made and so not taken preventive action. A lesson learnt.

Much more serious was the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Putting aside for these purposes the rights or wrongs of removing the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the fundamental miscalculation was to believe that, by changing those regimes from ones of brutal dictatorship to ones of democracy—a perfectly laudable aim in principle—we could overcome the absence, in those countries, of proper institutions of government, and the presence of religious sectarianism and of external players with an interest in undermining progress.

This was not an example of hubris in the sense of disdain for others or a belief in the overweening capacity of Western leadership to effect change. It was a misplaced assessment that the world as it should be could be forged from the world as it is, and that democracy could be transplanted into a political body that was going to have multiple pressures to reject the organ.

The belief in the inherent superiority of a democratic system gave us an exaggerated view of how and where it could take root.

The rise and fall of the former leader of Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi, offers another example.

I was and remain an admirer. She is a brave woman, and the world, which correctly recognised her as a martyr when she was imprisoned for years by the country's ruling military junta, has been too hasty in condemning her for not standing up against the oppression of the minority Rohingya population in her country when, as her removal and fresh imprisonment shows, her room for manoeuvre was much smaller than the outside world could understand.

In the early days when she became—at least the titular—Leader of the country, we had several conversations. I tried to describe the challenge of governing, how hard it was to make change, how I felt that she needed to recruit the right people to help, and how she should beware all the pitfalls she was certain to encounter. Basically, I tried to persuade her that being the people's idol was totally different from governing them.

She was polite but resistant. “The people love me,” she would say. “But I will have to manage the military.” I would reply that the people's love didn't eliminate the need to deliver, and that part of managing the military was to create enough practical change, particularly in the economy and government services, that their ability to interfere would be constrained.

I used the example of Nelson Mandela. He, too, was an icon, but, despite his global status, he knew that the political transformation he had wrought needed to be followed by on-the-ground change in the daily lives of people. In other words, he possessed the humility to recognise the limits of what he had achieved. The fact that his hopes for his country have not been realised by his successors is not a reflection on his personal qualities or powers of perception. They reflect the size of the task he knew he faced.

Aung San Suu Kyi was unpersuaded. Probably, in any event, she would have been brought down; maybe any change would have made the military even more fearful of the permanent loss of power. We will never know.

But I think, had she focused more on delivery, and relied less on her undoubted charisma and the love the people had for her, had she been able to give a sense to the country that political change had liberated the

possibility of practical improvement, she would have stood a better chance of thwarting the junta forces, and rallying international support.

Hubris can sometimes arise not through an excess of confidence but through an inner, though unacknowledged, lack of it. “We can do it ourselves” is a cry I often hear from some presidents. They are the ones who fail. Fortunately, there are plenty today who are completely open to outside help and, where it is offered, are more than happy to take it. They’re the ones who succeed.

I recall a conversation with one president who faced a significant problem with Islamist terrorism in his country, and was struggling. I suggested he bring in the Americans or the British. No need to, he responded. We’ll deal with it. I explained that, around the world, there were countries with huge experience of how you track, monitor, disrupt and eventually defeat these groups, all of whom have a similar *modus operandi*. We don’t need people telling us how to handle our problems, he said defiantly.

His terrorism problem grew worse. Too late he appreciated that he needed external help and started to seek it. Today, terrorism in his country remains an ongoing battle. With the help he has now secured, he might ultimately win it. But the lost years have taken a toll on his nation’s fortunes.

Once you realise that hubris is a pervasive danger for Leaders, and once you see that, if indulged, nemesis is not far behind, your risk sensors become stronger. Your eyes stay wide open. You listen to advice and weigh it. A belief in your invincibility is replaced by a belief in your vulnerability, and you relax into it, knowing your decision-making will be better.

I think this is true of life more generally. Since leaving office, I have observed a lot of business leaders. Some have risen and stayed there. Those are the ones who prepare for every eventuality, who try to see round every corner, knowing that behind each one that looks nice something nasty may be lurking. They are the leaders who think—to switch Greek analogies—that Icarus is an object lesson in what to avoid.

The others—well, they're the ones you read about, the ones with their wings singed, falling to earth.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

You Are Never as Knowledgeable or as Smart as You Think You Are

The problem with winning, especially in what is often the “winner takes all” world of politics, is that you think you’re smarter than you are, or indeed than anyone is. I won. Ergo I am brilliant. Or, at least, better than anyone else.

Since leaving office, I have met a big swathe of the business community, including, for fundraising purposes, a significant number of billionaires. They are often people who have had a great idea, pulled off an amazing deal, invented something clever. They have become wealthy. Good for them. I have noticed, however, that in some that success has given them a sense of self-belief that makes them think they’re not only good at the thing that made them rich, but smarter than anyone on other things.

The political world contains similar offenders. You win a great victory or manage to ascend somehow to the top of what the nineteenth-century Conservative prime minister Benjamin Disraeli called “the greasy pole.” You conclude that you’re a genius. You figured it all out. You came through. You beat the rest.

You forget that it isn’t only about ability; it is also about circumstance, the door of opportunity opening in a timely manner, the poor quality of the opposition and, of course, luck. Yes, be proud of the win. But don’t let it fool you into thinking you’re smarter or more knowledgeable than you really are.

As I wrote in an earlier chapter, politics is the one profession in the world that puts someone into a position of extraordinary power and responsibility without requiring any prior experience or demonstration of capacity on their part.

Naturally, there is a process of selection. You will have demonstrated a certain track record in the business of politics that makes you a contender; your colleagues will have had a say. You're not literally plucked from the crowd. But you may—likely, will—have had no actual experience of governing.

What you have had experience of is winning. That will have involved making judgements, taking decisions, fighting the good fight. These are not easy to do, so your success will have given you a measure of confidence in your own capability that is probably justified. But the important thing to recognise—right from the outset—is the limitations of the proof of that capability. Winning power doesn't mean you know how to govern. Having taken correct decisions to get to power doesn't mean you're an infallible decision-maker when faced with the infinitely tougher challenge of governing a country.

A degree of humility isn't the natural posture of most politicians. But if you don't have it, you will soon learn it, or go under.

There is a vast expanse of things you know little about.

Focused on attaining the position, you will not have focused in the same way on all the dimensions of reality you will be confronted with as Leader in government.

So, start with just a simple appreciation of the need to learn, an attitude that is accepting of the wisdom of others, an openness to ways of thinking about problems that aren't as you thought while campaigning to win.

I have been surprised, shocked and more than occasionally appalled at how much I have learnt since leaving office.

"I've looked at life from both sides now"—as Joni Mitchell sang. I know infinitely more about the world, despite having been prime minister

of a significant country for ten years, and I have been able to study without the stress and struggle of running a government.

I have tried to build and to develop businesses and organisations, not simply think about regulating them. It's a lot tougher than I thought.

I have met people from all walks of life across all cultures and creeds, far beyond my native shores.

I have read papers not just for information but for reflection.

And here's a truly extraordinary thing: I have kept maturing. I left office at fifty-four. Old enough, you might think. But no, the process doesn't stop.

When I discuss this subject with other "formers," they immediately nod.

So, what should this tell you?

It should drive home the point that you may think you're a genius because you have succeeded in winning power, but you will find out sooner or later that it's not true. Try for sooner.

And the more I know, the more I realise how little I know. This is why the preparations for venturing into politics and the time you spend in it, in opposition, or on the way up, matter so much. Because there will come a time when you understand the limitations of your knowledge; when you understand what Roy Jenkins, the great Home Secretary and Chancellor of the Labour governments of the 1960s and 70s, meant when, in response to my asking what he was thinking about when he appeared pensive as we sat together before doing a radio broadcast, he said he was "contemplating the vast expanses of my own ignorance." And Roy was very definitely not an ignorant man.

When you're the Leader, you're the "Decision-Maker." You will make the decision. That's your job. But it doesn't mean you're the best person to be making that decision. There may be someone far better qualified. It's just that they're not the Leader.

In other words, don't mistake the fact that you're the decision-maker for an assumption no one knows better. There is a difference between being smart and being powerful. A Leader will usually be treated with more respect than they deserve by those who exist by reason of their patronage. The good ones—a few—will speak up when they think you're talking nonsense. The others—the many—won't. Let them try and fool you; but don't fool yourself.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

It's Better to Be Respected than Loved, Feared or "Trusted"

This chapter heading will jar. Surely it is good to be loved as a Leader? Yes it is, and that most often happens when the Leader is an iconic figure who represents an idea, but it won't happen to a Leader in the process of making difficult change.

Being loved by the people is a wonderful thing, but it isn't the objective of governing. Making change which improves their lives materially—economically and socially—this is the purpose, and precisely because it involves altering the status quo and upsetting interests along the way, it is unlikely to be accompanied by love.

And surely it is not good to be feared? Sometimes it is good, when a Leader trying to do the right thing is confronted by those trying to stop him or her and they need deterring.

Great Leaders use fear sparingly, but they use it. Great powers use it, too. Most of the time this is deeply resented. But there is an interesting lesson I have learnt about American power. It is true that countries resent it; think it is often wielded hypocritically, inconsistently or in a way which is self-serving. Allies frequently feel ignored, or consulted for form but not in substance.

But over a long time in politics, I have concluded that what worries allies most is American absence, and that what emboldens bad actors most is a feeling that America has wandered off the field of play. And even though I don't like many of the uses to which China's power is put, I want

its allies, which now include Russia and Iran, to fear it sufficiently to exercise restraint when China wishes it.

And so to the issue of trust. It must unquestionably be good to be trusted? Trust is such an essential element in leadership—encompassing the ability to take people with you, guiding them through the difficult change, preserving unity in the face of challenge.

Well, here, it all depends on what you mean by “trust.” In politics, it is an elusive concept, and we need to define what we really mean by it.

At one level, no one “trusts” politicians. My thesaurus lists 139 synonyms for trust; and a huge number are to do with certainty, confidence, expectation, hope, as well as, of course, truth.

But nothing is very certain in politics. Hope and expectation always run vastly in advance of what realistically can be achieved. And truth? “What is truth?” Pontius Pilate is supposed to have asked of Jesus; and in politics it would be a good question to ask.

Facts are true, despite the contemporary and hopefully temporary indulgence that feelings are as important as facts and that the latter can be changed by the former.

But in politics people often confuse opinions with facts and hold them to be “true.” “Immigration is ruining the country,” says politician X. “At last someone is telling the truth,” a significant proportion of the population may say. And they conclude that this politician can be “trusted,” as opposed to all the wishy-washy careerist ones who tell you it’s more nuanced than that and properly controlled immigration is a good thing, who point out the role it has played in American economic supremacy, or in the UK technology sector, or who argue that foreign nurses and doctors are vital to the National Health Service, or that without migrant workers the hotel and hospitality sectors in virtually any developed country would collapse.

Of course, these are arguments which don’t lend themselves to slogans or one-liners. The very presence of nuance makes for the absence of trust because it appears to be unsatisfying, mealy-mouthed, wavering or uncertain.

In politics, the populists are regularly hailed as the ones to be trusted, the ones “speaking truth to power,” the ones challenging “the elites,” “telling it like it is,” unafraid to break with conventional thinking.

But, in reality, what they’re doing is telling you what you want to hear, what you want to believe, what lifts your expectation not through hard graft but hot air.

I always say the time to trust a politician most is when they’re telling you what you least want to be told. If you think about it, that’s obvious. Any fool can work out what you want to hear; they just have to make a cover version of your own thoughts. It’s a Leader genuinely wanting to do the best for you who will tell you that what you want is either not possible or not what you need.

I have kept this book mercifully light on Brexit, and here leave aside the pros and cons of the decision.

You can make the case that, in the long term, it is in Britain’s interests to have left; that we can strike out in a new direction; that the short-term pain is worth the long-term gain.

What you can’t seriously argue is that when we break up the trading arrangements with the partners with whom we do half our trade, we won’t suffer at least some immediate commercial loss. It would be weird if it were otherwise.

Or that when we leave our continent’s political union, we won’t lose political influence, at least with them.

Yet that is exactly what the Brexit proponents claimed.

And I bet those proponents—Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage and others—will have enjoyed higher levels of trust when the Brexit referendum was held in 2016 than David Cameron, George Osborne and other pro-Europeans, even though the arguments the latter were deploying—namely that Brexit would cause economic damage and loss of political weight in Europe—were manifestly correct and have been proved so.

The point was that many people wanted to believe what the Brexiteers were saying and therefore “trusted” them more.

Any political Leader making difficult decisions will quickly run into “trust” issues.

A government spending money? High levels of “trust.” A government cutting spending? Poll their “trust” figures at such a moment and they will be negative. But believe me, no politician cuts public spending out of a desire to do it, but because, rightly or wrongly, they think it is necessary for the long-term health of the country.

“Trust” is not a trustworthy concept in politics unless applied with strict care.

In any case, the daily business of politics militates against being trusted. Sometimes you’re prevaricating; sometimes you’re changing your mind; sometimes you’re holding back; sometimes your promises turn out not to be false but to be unrealisable for reasons good or bad; sometimes you’re just having to manage colleagues or circumstances, and can appear shifty as a result.

Of course, sometimes the Leader is dishonest or corrupt. Then it’s a different ball game.

I don’t actually know a lot of “truly” dishonest politicians. However, I do know a lot who are considered that.

Take French politics, for example. France is a tough country to govern. It votes for presidents who promise to change things. Those presidents start to make change. The nation revolts. Their “trust” ratings plummet. It’s completely illogical: their “trust” ratings should rise.

Or think of the courageous voices across the Sahel region of Africa exposing, rightly, the utter myth (pushed often by Russian-inspired social media campaigns) that what is holding those countries back is some modern form of French colonialism. The myth is highly popular, the opponents of it unpopular. The first group enjoy high levels of trust, the latter not.

During the Covid crisis, I lost count of the number of people who would say to me that they didn't "trust" the politicians imposing lockdowns or seeking to rush out "unsafe" vaccines.

Now, there are perfectly legitimate arguments about the extent of the lockdowns and even some about vaccination. But why would a political Leader advocate lockdowns unless they truly believed they were necessary? Or vaccination?

Those Leaders might have been right—I happen to think they were—or they might have been wrong. But there is no doubt that they believed in the policy they were pursuing. To have conducted this debate on the basis of "trust" is without any logic at all.

The point is: if you set out to be "trusted" as a politician you will find, over time, that it is a tough accolade to maintain.

Trust is better sought as a consequence of respect; and respect is something a Leader can and should attain.

Trust in this sense is not about arguing over who is most "honest" or who tells the most "truth," but about whether the Leader can be "trusted" with the nation, trusted to make decisions in what they genuinely believe is in the national interest.

Deep down, people know that politics can be a difficult, even dirty, business; and deep down they accept this. Frankly, they would not want an "honest" naïf in charge of their affairs.

They want someone to deliver; someone who has the ambition and the competence to govern; someone they respect as a Leader, not necessarily as a private character.

They don't like being told about hard truth and choices. But they will follow Leaders.

And ultimately, even if the Leader is doing unpopular things, even if the volume of complaint appears to drown out the patient explanation of necessity, respect can still be retrieved. That is a precious political asset.

And that begets trust of a different but to my mind deeper sort, not because you like the Leader or like their policies, but because you know they're prepared to serve you with a service only true leadership can provide.

To return briefly to love and fear. I know Leaders who come, in time, to be loved because the effect of their policies, however tough to administer, has been recognised as beneficial. But they're usually Leaders in wartime, or ones who can govern for a long period and be around to reap the benefits they have sowed.

But for those operating in a democracy, in peacetime, with term limits, constitutional or practical, it's rare enough for me to struggle to think of an example. Sure, they can be loved by their adherents, their fan base, but loved by the country—hmm, I don't think so.

And as for fear, except in the narrow sense I alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, even dictatorships can't rule by fear alone. For a time, of course; and maybe North Korea is an exception; but, overall, eventually the people rebel.

Fear doesn't engender respect. Leadership does. So, don't try to be loved and avoid being feared except when strictly necessary; aim for respect. It's not as beautiful as love or as satisfying to your inner demons as fear, but it's the only thing worth really "trusting" in politics.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

Ambition: Calculate Too Much, and You Miscalculate

There is nothing wrong with ambition; and no politician will rise far without it. I had a notion when I first became an MP that just staying a constituency MP, doing my best for my constituents, would be enough, so thrilled was I to be in the Mother of Parliaments. That lasted all of about ten minutes. The moment I saw what power was and what it could do, I wanted it.

I wanted it for the usual mix of motives: to change the world, to put principle into practice, to be respected and recognised as a person with power and to feel that power, to feel how it could shape my world around me as well as the world of others. And for any other moderately successful politician the motives are roughly the same—though not necessarily in the order I’ve just given them.

Politicians who boast about their honesty/integrity/attachment to truth and goodness, as opposed to those “other politicians,” make the seasoned among us reach for the bucket, precisely because we know politics and politicians can’t be like that, and for sound reasons as well as bad.

Don’t get me wrong. All those virtues are important. But the plain fact is that there is too much of the business of politics that involves wheeling and dealing, intrigue and some ruthlessness to permit it to be conducted by paragons.

Inevitably, as an aspiring politician, you are drawn to creating alliances, sometimes quite factional ones. You have to judge which fights to pick,

when to speak up and when to shut up. You have to measure constantly the space between tactical necessity and strategic objective. It's a maze, and some politicians get lost in it. Their ambition eclipses their principles; they oscillate between this route and that, never quite finding the point of entry or exit, and so usually end up nowhere.

Not all. Some with very high levels of intelligence or huge political skill are able to negotiate the maze, despite the lack of a consistent plan of action. And never discount the role Lady Luck plays.

But such politicians are the exception. I wish to analyse the rule.

Let's begin at the beginning. Before you're a Leader. You're interested in politics and want to make it your career.

Ambition is clearly going to be in the mix from the start, but your first consideration should be that politics is best treated as a vocation, not a career. In other words, if you don't feel the intense desire to do it, don't do it. There is far too much misery and risk in the game to be in it unless you really want to play. With passion.

You then need to prepare yourself. And the initial preparation has to be based on the understanding that politics can't be done well unless you know about the world beyond it. When I advise young people who are thinking about pursuing a full-time commitment to politics, I start by telling them: do not go from university to become a researcher to an MP, then get selected as an MP, then work your way through the ranks. You might become very proficient at the business of politics if you take that route, but your practical proficiency for your country will be severely constrained.

It's far better to learn about the real world before you enter the parallel one of politics. Gain experience of how normal people live, work and think. See how businesses or, for example, schools or hospitals and other public services are run; how people have to make decisions in positions of leadership, day in, day out; what really matters and what only appears to matter. If you can, see another part of the world, become familiar with a different culture and language. It will never be time wasted if it's time spent learning.

The knowledge you acquire may or may not be of practical use to you later, but the immersion in something different, the honing of sensitivity to the concerns of the vast majority who do not spend their time obsessing about politics, will shape your political character in ways that will make you a better servant and a more informed master.

The small number of years—just seven—that I spent as a lawyer in a completely non-political field of work was hugely beneficial to me when finally I did become an MP. I worked with people who didn't care and never asked what my politics were. I realised that most people don't spend their time thinking about politics, obsessing over this item or that in the daily news, wondering who's up and who's down in the political world. Rather, they are deeply focused on their business, or their job, or the prospects for their family.

It gave me an acute sense of the “normal.” And the distance between it and politics.

So, if you hanker after a life within politics, start with collecting as much knowledge as you can of the world outside it. That will make your ambition much more likely to result in fulfilment.

After that, if you wish to navigate the maze successfully, realise that belief—a set of convictions you hold sincerely and not just conveniently—is a vital accompaniment to that success.

Calculate too much and you miscalculate.

This may appear naive advice. But it is my personal experience. Two examples from my own political life prove my point. The first dates back more than forty years to when I was seeking to be selected as a Labour candidate in the 1983 election. I approached at least twelve different constituencies in the hope of being chosen by one of them. All rejected me, sometimes in favour of a would-be who, frankly, was barely sentient. It was depressing. It was also fairly readily explicable: I was avowedly and openly in favour of expelling the far-left Militant Tendency from the Labour Party at a time when to be against expulsion was a litmus test of leftist

respectability. I would be doing well; that question would be asked and answered; and down my ship would go.

Just before the election, the constituency of Sedgefield—then a safe Labour seat and with a membership that was strongly anti-Militant—came up. Now a stance that had ruled me out in a dozen other constituencies became an advantage. I won.

And here's the thing: several of the seats for whose candidature I contested unsuccessfully ended up, because of the scale of Labour's 1983 defeat, being lost. Had I prevailed in the selection process for any of those, I would not have been in Parliament after 1983; and therefore, would never have gained the leadership eleven years later. In the end, sticking to my convictions paid off.

I became Leader of the Labour Party in much the same manner. After we had suffered our fourth election defeat in a row in 1992, I had become an out-and-out Labour moderniser, saying things much of the party found too bold or unacceptable. The then Leader, John Smith, even warned me good-naturedly to be less vociferous, because in his view it meant I could never become Leader. But I thought: what the hell, I'm fed up with perpetual opposition; I have a clear view of what is holding us back, and I am just going to say what I think—carefully but nonetheless plainly.

Tragically, John died. The leadership was suddenly vacant. The party decided it, too, had had enough of impotence in opposition and I became the exemplar of the old adage about right person, right place, right time.

I have seen the same thing happen many times with many of the Leaders I work with. The best ones. The ones who manage to stay the course. Sure, they will have played the game with skill, worked the corridors, done the glad-handing and occasionally backhanding. Lots of calculation will have gone into the mix, certainly. But at a crucial point, they stopped calculating and stood up.

Leaders take risks—sometimes the ones others won't or don't take. Emmanuel Macron would not have become Leader of France otherwise. Nelson Mandela wouldn't have become a political icon. Mikhail Gorbachev

wouldn't have set in train the disintegration of the old Soviet Union which led to the liberation of Eastern Europe. Winston Churchill would not have led Britain through the war, or Charles de Gaulle France after it. All these Leaders, at some point in their career, took a stand that mere calculation in furtherance of mere ambition would have said was ill-judged.

This is not to say that those who strike strong positions and stick with them are necessarily people you may agree with. Margaret Thatcher has her detractors, of course, as well as admirers. But no one can seriously doubt that she stuck to what she believed in.

The new wave of populists in part succeed because people think they stand out against the prevailing wisdom, the soggy centre, the status quo. Now, this may be sham to the degree that some are populists absolutely through calculation. They take a grievance and exploit it, calculating that by doing so they gain political traction. But they will quickly be found out once they attain power, unless they have thought through their positions and have a plan and not just a performance.

So, this is not a plea to recognise how the "good guys" have principles and the "bad guys" don't. It's just a practical life lesson in political leadership. If everything for you is just a career calculation, understand the risk that the world changes and you're left with a miscalculation.

The one thing you can guarantee in politics is that what seems immutable, one day becomes mutable: things often turn out unexpectedly. The politics can change. The circumstances can change. What was once apparent to you and a minority now becomes apparent to the generality of people. You have taken an unpopular stand on an issue, and your analysis has been proved correct. In a moment, what looked a foolish bet suddenly reappears as far-sightedness.

And "the people" will ultimately spot those who are believers and those who aren't. Again, to be clear, this doesn't make your beliefs right, it simply emphasises the point about what today we call "authenticity."

Ultimately, there is a deeper reason: politics isn't worth it unless you are genuinely acting according to belief. OK, power is power; and it's

attractive, even a drug, which, once addicted to, is painful to give up. But unless you're an emotional robot—and I accept there are quite a few of those in politics—there is such a thing as peace of mind. You want to think you tried to do good, and even if you failed trying, you tried and failed for good motives.

There is a karma in politics and it has—as karma does—a way of reinstating itself, in the end. And for all politics and politicians, there is an end.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

Don't Make Enemies Deliberately; You Will Make Enough Accidentally

The Leader has status, authority, power. They can appoint, anoint and annul. They will be surrounded by people wanting to please them, hoping to earn or achieve advancement, usually by any means possible. Such people may advance through merit. That's a full tick. Best in class. But if they can't do so through merit, they will seek to advance through flattery, through catching the ear of the Leader, through becoming apparently indispensable, through uber loyalty, through whatever tricks and twists work.

The Leader must be able to spot merit and reward it. They must also be able to manage those who lack it, but whose ambitions are nonetheless every bit as great as—sometimes greater than—those with it. This latter group can easily turn from being uber loyal to being uber disloyal, should their pretensions to advancement be thwarted or go unrecognised. And the unfortunate reality is that they're usually also the larger group, because real merit—stand-out talent—is rare in politics.

Such people, once they're not promoted as they believe they should be—or, worse, when necessity demands their demotion—swiftly become a potential danger. They realise that the Leader is no longer their route to advancement. They therefore gravitate towards others—and there are always others—who are willing to promise to deliver what the Leader has decided not to. They cease to be friendly allies and become hostile critics.

And that's not the only way that political enemies are made.

Some people like to bask in the reflected glow of the Leader, to know they count, to be able to say to their friends that they're friends with the Leader. They will be people of varying levels of influence, not ministers but invariably individuals with an acute sense of their own importance. They are very easy to slight. They are quickly offended if you forget things they think you should remember or fail to pay attention to them when they believe they deserve it. The smallest perceived lapse on your part will lead them to conclude that they have gone from preference to indifference in your eyes.

Moments of apparent neglect on your part are generally perceived rather than deliberate. Being Leader is a big task, devouring your energy and focus. It's unreasonable to expect that you should be alert at all times to what, compared with the size of the issues you're dealing with, are trivial matters. But the point is they're not trivial to those you are neglecting. It is ridiculous, infuriating and irrational that people unintentionally slighted should harbour resentment. But they do.

Then there are those who are jealous. Jealousy is a simple emotion, and we all possess the capacity for it. We try to conquer it, but it is an insidious and clever manipulator of our psyche and knows how to present itself as something different and more principled. Leaders shouldn't kid themselves on this front. However nice people are to their face, they are essentially living in a habitat awash with tiny invisible goblins of jealousy, waiting for Leaders to stumble or if the opportunity arises tripping them up.

All these categories of folk can tip very easily from mild dislike to active hostility. Even at their most positive, they're only a pinprick away from being enemies.

Then, of course, you get those who are opposed to you because they genuinely disagree with you. Yes, there are such people! Their disagreement may be cordial, but it can just as easily turn nasty. It may well be principled, but in politics the political and the personal are hard to distinguish.

The point is: you will make enemies, lots of them, legions of them, and you will make them unintentionally, occasionally not even noticing that you

have done so. It follows, therefore, that you shouldn't make enemies deliberately, because you will make enough of them accidentally.

Act at all times with good grace. My dad taught me at an early age that charm costs you nothing. Smile and be pleasant. It's not difficult. Kindness is a virtue which is available to anyone. Exhibiting it won't stop you accumulating enemies, but it will at least enable you to minimise them and, for the objective observers of your world, persuade them that the enmity is unjustified or exaggerated. It all helps.

By the same token, a Leader should never bear a grudge. Grudges are wasted energy. They are pointless and mentally time-consuming. They are bad for the esteem in which others hold you and in which you hold yourself. They're also a sure way of converting someone who dislikes you into someone who hates you.

Of course, a Leader should both display and demand loyalty. And those who are disloyal should be removed for the good of the entire project. That is good leadership. Incompetence should also have consequences. Tolerating it is a leadership failure. The Leader who fails to take such steps as are necessary, who shows weakness or who—maybe out of friendship or fear—permits the disloyal and incompetent to remain part of the team, sends a bad message across the organisation, demoralising those who are loyal and competent, and creating an environment in which poor behaviour is seen as indulged.

But being firm over bad behaviour is completely different from bearing a grudge because of it. Settling a score—using one's power, authority and status to inflict injury on someone for no discernible governing purpose other than that they deserve it—is wrong. Such an action is an extension of ego, not an expression of leadership.

Leadership is best exercised when the senses are cold, not hot; calm, not stormy; detached from personal rancour; when the teeth are not grinding or gnashing and the eyes are seeing the whole picture, not the small corner to which they are drawn by irritation or anger.

And there's another reason why it's a mistake to be too quick to burn bridges. While it's true that in politics your friends can become enemies, it's also the case that your enemies can become, if not friends, at least colleagues.

When as prime minister I was considering appointing or promoting someone, those close to me would sometimes say: "But have you seen what they once said about you?" I would respond: "I don't care; they're of use now." People fall out with you, but you should always be prepared to let them fall back in.

Maybe you had a real and profound disagreement over an item of policy. Don't treat it as personal. Perhaps in the future another item will arise over which you find yourselves in agreement and for which you need their support. Don't make it impossible for them to give it.

The word "ruthless" literally means without pity. But in the political context, it is better understood as meaning without discolouring emotion. There is nothing wrong with emotion—we're human. But emotion should not discolour. It should not warp. When a Leader acts ruthlessly, the absence of pity is because of the presence of purpose. In this case, being "ruthless" is a strength. But being without pity out of resentment, this is weakness dressed up as strength. And it rarely fails to bring misfortune.

In those political systems that operate according to a proportional voting system, coalitions are the usual order of things. And they shift constantly. I have watched governments, in such systems, being formed of coalitions between wildly varying parties, some of whom have seemed viscerally opposed to each other, yet who somehow found the ability to come together when necessary.

But such cooperation is always harder when the opposition is visceral not in a political sense but a personal one. Then you're not simply negotiating over different policy positions but overcoming emotional angst and fury. That's much tougher.

So, remember: your job is to lead. There is no space for anything which saps your energy or attention or is not substantially important for governing.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Create a Constituency, Not a Clique

I like the elevated parts of politics—the ideas, the policy formation, the decision-making, the challenge of meeting a problem, wrestling with it and solving it. These are the things that stir my blood, activate my senses, give me the feeling the whole business is worth the frequency of pain and disappointment.

But these on their own are not sufficient for survival in the uniquely hazardous street life of politics' inner city, where the gangs roam, every corner has its own assassin lying in wait, even the most harmless-seeming passer-by can suddenly turn feral, and ambition and intrigue cohabit in deadly combination. You need people around you who will support, protect and fight for you, who will form a circle around you and provide an iron shield as you walk the street. In other words, you need a constituency—a party, a movement, a group or cadres, foot soldiers.

I learnt the importance of this dimension of leadership the hard way—through being bad at it. By the end of my time in office, I had a group of people around me who supported my ideas and policy direction and who were indeed courageous and willing to stand up, fight and protect. But there weren't enough of them and they weren't organised in the way I needed.

Because party management frankly bored me, I too often neglected it. That was a mistake. And not one to be proud of. On the contrary, failing in this dimension involved a failure to lead. It was an act of incompetence, because competence in this area is a crucial part of leading well. It wasn't that I didn't have people—close aides—doing a lot of the hard work in the party and doing it with great skill. It was that I failed to appreciate that, at a

certain point, they could not substitute for me. They could help carry the burden, but I needed to be at the centre of the carriage.

Engagement, then—with a political party in the conventional sense, or a movement or even a faction within a broader base—is crucial for a Leader. While you're in opposition, this is relatively easy. Though it may not seem so then, you have more time on your hands than when you're in government. And, in one sense, party management in opposition is your equivalent to governing. Managing the party well shows your executive ability. This matters, because it is evidence of a capability to govern, even though the significance of the decisions taken is obviously much smaller.

The key to successful leadership is to continue with this management in government when the pressures are all countervailing. Now you don't have the time, the energy, even the patience to worry about the party because you're weighed down with decision-making that affects real lives with real consequences. But you have to find that time, energy and patience, because managing your constituency will better enable you to make those decisions in the manner you want.

Disgruntled foot soldiers don't make for a well-performing army. So, don't regard as an intrusion time and energy spent keeping your cadres disgruntled. Regard it as a professional necessity. Remember that for those working on your behalf, down in the bowels of the body politic, you as Leader quickly become a remote figure. They may admire you, but they need to know that you admire them, regard them as essential, see them as vital to the health of that body.

Remember, too, that these foot soldiers fall into two camps: those who are presently foot soldiers but have a natural and often well-founded ambition eventually to be officers or even leaders; and those who are content as foot soldiers and who either have the self-awareness to know that is the limit of their capacity or have chosen to limit themselves and have no larger ambition. The first group need to know that there is a route of advancement and that you as Leader appreciate it is your duty to help them advance. The second group need to know that you appreciate their

importance, that they're not beneath you but alongside you, that you do not take them for granted or confuse their lack of ambition with a lack of pride or desire for acknowledgement.

Your engagement with these groups needs to go beyond occasionally turning up and making a speech. The schedule—that indispensable prop—has to create space for meetings that allow for dialogue, opportunities to explain, the sharing of arguments they can use with opponents of your policy, to educate, to cultivate and to generate support. The personal things—marriage, children, deaths in the family, achievements outside the political arena—should also be noted and celebrated. The foot soldiers need to be inspired by your purpose and leadership, but they also need to feel they're part of it—integral, indeed. Each may be a cog in the wheel but they're a cog without which the wheel doesn't turn.

In the first flush of victory when you sweep to power, all this may appear redundant, a nice to do but not a primal duty. But when the tough times come—and inevitably they do—the importance of this constituency will become manifest. That's the moment when you'd better find it's ready to be mobilised rather than suddenly discover you need it.

And don't mistake a clique for a constituency. Of course, any Leader will have an inner circle of close allies. These are partners in the whole endeavour, those with whom you share intimate political thinking, anxieties and secrets. They're the people you enjoy spending time with, because the trust is there that allows indiscreet musing among the illuminati, in a métier in which, as a general rule, musing is unwise and indiscretion severely punished.

But that's not at all the same thing as a constituency: not in scale, and not in why and how it is brought into being and maintained. The clique provides comfort. The constituency provides protection. The first makes your life more bearable. The second keeps you alive.

Unfortunately, and occasionally disagreeably, your constituency's needs can go beyond simply feeling your love. They need sustenance of a more tangible kind. This could take the form of a policy position that really

matters to them; a move symbolic or substantial that proves you're one of them. If it matters to you too, that's fine, naturally. But if it doesn't or, worse, runs counter to your thinking, you need to weigh things up very carefully. It's possible you may have to concede on something for a lower purpose in order to achieve an overall higher purpose. There is, in my view, nothing unprincipled about doing this.

Of course, if it's all just about keeping the Leader in power regardless, then the whole project is worthless. But I am writing for Leaders who do have a genuine desire to make change they believe in. And for these Leaders, from time to time—not too often and not on too major an issue—the business of politics demands concession to those you can rely on when the assassin moves from the street corner towards you, or the gangs turn on you, or the harmless passer-by mutates, or you become the target of an ambitious intriguer.

And there is another reason for creating and keeping a constituency: it will protect your legacy.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

Protect Your Legacy

Protect your legacy, because, if you don't, no one else will.

It's easier said than done, however.

After a time in power, you forget what your previous life was like. You have become used to the rank, the trappings, the infrastructure like scaffolding beneath you keeping you aloft, and in the pulpit, or what Teddy Roosevelt called the “bully pulpit” (in those days the word “bully” meant more often wonderful, as in the old-fashioned English phrase “bully for you”). By pulpit, Roosevelt—that most remarkable of political Leaders and a study well worth the trouble all in himself—meant the power of the platform that being Leader of a country gives you. You can choose to be the first to speak—and you can usually have the last word too.

What you say matters. When you pronounce, people listen. With a minimum of skill, you can set the agenda because you're the Leader. Others can try, but you carry more weight. People can attack what you do, but they're reacting to your action. The microphone is always there in front of you. When you use it, no one else can match the volume.

That means you can also counter the naysayers. When opponents are rubbishing your achievements, you can defend your record loudly. When they're questioning your motives, you can answer their questions with authority. They can scream and bawl, hurl insults, make hurtful barbs against your record and your person, make accusations. But they can't silence you, or deprive you of that microphone and its power. They can besiege the pulpit and throw ordure at it, but you're still the one giving the sermon.

Once you step down, once you're out of the pulpit and another has taken your place in it, your whole world changes.

Gone is the power to command the microphone. Gone is the ability to speak louder and carry your voice further. Gone are the trappings, along with the rank. Gone is that infrastructure buoying you up.

Worse than being silenced, you can now be ignored.

And it's not just that. The person who comes after you will not necessarily see it as being in their interest to be supportive of or even fair to what you have done when in office. On the contrary, if from another tribe or party, it is entirely in their interest to be disobliging, to proclaim their inheritance as woeful, to present the challenges left in your wake as massively difficult. That way they can construct a narrative that allows them to excuse their own failings or inability to meet the expectations they have aroused to win power.

And even if your successor comes from your own party, they reasonably enough want to show that they're making a new start, adopting fresh thinking, shifting direction. Otherwise, they fear, people might wonder why them and not more of you?

As in other areas, you can profit more from my mistakes than by my achievements.

When I left office, I had big ambitions that did not include retirement. I wanted to do something different. I wanted to build something. And building takes work and focus. Seventeen years on, after a few false starts and rough patches, I feel I am, finally, in the place I wanted to be.

I chair an institute that is growing and that has a global reach, with teams of people all over the world helping governments make change. Which is good, but ...

Because I had a new life with a new purpose, I thought I could leave the old life to take care of itself. Big mistake.

Inevitably, there were too many people with an interest in dissing my record. The Labour Party turned its back on New Labour because it wanted

to show that a more traditional Labour Party was a better and more principled vehicle for progressive politics. The Conservative Party, which had suffered the shock for the first time since Labour's formation of three successive full terms of Labour in office, not unnaturally wanted to join in any discreditation to make sure Labour did not return to a winning formula. And to be fair, that part of the Conservative Party which was more centrist was itself coming under increasing attack from its own right wing.

I allowed a perfectly genuine and understandable disagreement and anger about Iraq and the post-9/11 support of America (which I do not dispute for a moment must be a major part of the assessment of my time in office) to eclipse almost completely the achievements—whether in improved services, cuts in poverty, economic growth, reduced crime, social and liberal advance, peace in Ireland, a minimum wage or our leadership in development.

Today things are a little different. When I left office, others were able and for sure willing to define my legacy in wholly negative terms. Now, with a changed Labour Party wanting power and understanding finally that the route to getting it is not dissimilar to the route I followed, at last there are defenders again. The fact remains, though, that I was unprepared; and I should have been prepared.

I have watched this happen repeatedly with other Leaders after they have relinquished power. Often for the noble and worthy reason of not wanting to get in the way of their successors, they go mute. And in general, that may well be right, as I say in the next chapter. But where your own record is being attacked, you should drag yourself out of silence and engage. At least periodically.

I always say I will take responsibility for the decisions I took in office, but not for those taken after that. An important elaboration on this is not to take responsibility for issues which may have started with your decisions but were then governed by the decisions of your successors. You take responsibility for your time when you were Leader. You don't take responsibility for what follows it.

Of course, it is much easier to protect your legacy when you have created a constituency that continues to be aligned with it, after you have left office. Then you have defenders.

However, all this gives you only a fighting chance—and I won't hide the difficulty of achieving this objective. Sometimes the best you can do is adopt the Zen spirit and hope!

Henry Kissinger once told me that he tried to comfort President Nixon, as he was leaving the White House following the Watergate scandal, by saying: "History will be kinder to you." Nixon replied: "It all depends on who writes the history, Henry."

Now that is not entirely the case: history does write itself to a degree, and, despite what some may think or believe, facts are still facts. But the colour, the interpretation, the framing of motive and impact, these are judgements, and the judges need at least to hear both sides.

So, you have to create the advocacy and the advocates. You must devote some of your time to answering the criticism and making your case.

You may have departed from power, but you haven't departed from memory. You need to work on rendering some of that memory as positive.

CHAPTER FORTY

Leaving with Grace

There is no perfect time to leave. No perfect time to be at the pinnacle and then off it. No perfect time to be “THE ONE” and then “the one before THE ONE.”

Dictators can die in office. Democratically elected Leaders can leave because they have found something better to do. I can’t, however, think of a case when that has occurred.

So, it’s rarely a consented-to departure, not even when on the surface it appears to be.

In dictatorships, the motive for resisting departure is often fear. Most dictatorships involve a tight-knit group of people around the Leader. Generally, that tight-knit group have profited personally from their closeness to the source of their authority. Often, the Leader has participated in their schemes to accumulate riches or power. Their fear, therefore, is that a new Leader will take on the old, will see advantage in exposing the “wrongdoing” of the previous regime, and has their own entourage who expect to start their own self-aggrandising. That places both the old inner circle and the old Leader at risk. And in a dictatorship the leadership’s response to risk can be more deadly than embarrassed.

In a democracy you may be term-limited. So, departure from office at some point is inevitable. But that doesn’t mean you’re reconciled to it. Or you lose an election and never get that second mandate. Then you feel you have striven in vain. Or you’re sacked, toppled, pushed, panicked or punished until the life force drains away and you crave release. Even then you don’t really want to leave. Not really. Not deep down.

No one likes to go before the job is done, and as I said earlier, the job is never done. There is always a little bit of you and sometimes quite a lot of you that dwells on “unfinished business.”

The fact remains, though, that at some point, sooner or later, go you must. You won’t live forever and you won’t lead forever.

So, how do you do it the right way? Is there a right way?

I believe it’s possible to describe certain elements that may constitute a “right way.”

First of all, recognise that you may be obliged to leave power when you sincerely believe you shouldn’t. Reconcile yourself to it. Clinging on is not a good look, nor a good attribute. Be honest with yourself about it. Are you trying to stay because you think the country will be imperilled if you leave? Or is it an inner fear that the loss of power will mean a loss of face, even a loss of your faith in yourself; that when the thing which has come to define you passes, so will that self-definition?

Relinquishing power is never easy, especially if you feel your work is not finished, if the drive to govern for a reason is still present, if the fire in your own heart still burns. I mentioned earlier that it is an accompanying irony of governing that—usually, though of course not universally—the longer you govern, the better at it you become; and yet your popularity is often in inverse proportion to your capability.

So, you start at your most popular and least capable and end at your least popular but most capable. I was, in truth, a much better prime minister in my last five years in office than in my first, at least in domestic policy, and by the time I came to the ten-year mark, I had a real handle on how to make change and the type of change that would be most effective. But I knew my time was up; or, at least, up unless I was prepared to engage in a full-frontal fight for survival that could have harmed party and country.

Then there is the question of who succeeds you.

“Succession planning” in business has a whole industry devoted to it. It is vital to the survival of the company. I can think of good and bad examples.

When we come to politics, succession planning is every bit as important and often more so, given we're talking about the future of countries and not companies.

But the context for the planning is much, much more complicated. And frankly, I can't think of many good examples.

Most Leaders want to choose or, at least, play a part in choosing their successor.

Their reasons can, of course, be bad or selfish. A Leader might, for example, want to control the process because it gives them a feeling of comfort—they're out but they still count. Then it's just an extension of ego.

But their motives can also be honourable ones. The country may be in a fragile state; it may be a democracy but a young one, prone to disorder. The opposition may genuinely be destructive of the best interests of the nation. Or, in a more developed country, it may be that there is a project of change and, as we have seen, changing a country often takes the time of more than one Leader.

Good Leaders have a project of advancement for their country. Those who stay after they have become unable to drive the project forward, or the project itself is no longer relevant, just occupy a space better occupied by others. But it's not wrong to try to make sure that there is some continuity, particularly where it is clear the direction in which the Leader took the country is reaping benefit for the people economically or politically.

Continuity in policy—where the policy is soundly based, of course—is an essential prerequisite for a successful country. It provides stability, gives time for a long-term reform to work; it helps set a direction. In democratic systems, this can be hard to achieve, since the natural disposition of an opposition is to oppose.

In a “not democratic” system, continuity of policy is easier to achieve while the regime is in office. But at some point, the regime changes and the same problem arises. So, the Leader should still take care to plan.

Succession, then, matters. Pay attention to it, even if you find that, when the moment comes, the power to affect it disintegrates. After all,

politics is unpredictable. There is a multiplicity of different and occasionally warring interests; there are unexpected events which change the context of governing. All these conspire to make the circumstances and moment of departure hard to pinpoint and succession planning that much more difficult.

So, in leaving, try to make sure the future is in safe hands. But be realistic about who will take over. You are likely to lose the argument as often as you win it.

There is also something else which applies universally to succession planning for leadership: you can never really tell whether someone is up to the job until they have it. You can seek to assess their ability, and you would think if the newcomer has been near the top for a long time, you would be able to assess it with a high degree of accuracy. You would be wrong. You might think that your colleagues could judge who would be the best person to succeed. But they can as easily misjudge.

Finally, if you do manage to leave with a certain amount of grace, preserve it in the political afterlife.

That doesn't mean you become a hermit. Being a graceful former Leader is often confused with being a silent one. If an ex-Leader sees his or her country making what they believe is a serious error, or if they believe, as I did until recently, that their party is going in the wrong direction, they have, if not a duty, then at least a justification for speaking out.

But that is a different thing from deliberately undermining your successor because you hanker after a return; or becoming engaged in intrigue. In other words, if the issue is one of "big politics," fair enough. If it's small politics, your behaviour is ungracious and—by the way—usually futile.

I learnt a lesson early in adulthood about jealousy in love. Be friends with your ex. Preserve the friendship even if the close relationship has ended. Curb your inclination to bitterness, and conquer the chafing of your ego, even if, and maybe especially if, you've been dumped. You will feel

better about yourself if you do so; and your ex may, in time, come to view you in a more positive light. Of course, they might not. But that's life.

If you can leave with grace, then do so. However you feel at the time of departure, you will feel better later.

Postscript

I am regularly asked: did you enjoy being prime minister? Truthfully, “joy” was never the word that came to mind in that context. Some Leaders I know will answer yes and some will even mean it. But, frankly, for me at least, there was too much stress, too great an awareness of responsibility, too heavy a sense of the weight of it all, to say “joy” when summarising how I felt. Fulfilled—yes. Engrossed and energised—certainly. But joy is what I feel on the birth of a child or grandchild, at a wedding or a celebration of someone else’s achievement. In politics I felt it momentarily twice—when we concluded the Good Friday Agreement for peace in Northern Ireland, and when we won the bid to host the 2012 Olympics. But day to day I wasn’t prancing around Downing Street joyfully.

However, it really is a privilege to lead a nation. And it is important to feel that. To understand that the Leader is in a privileged position. For one thing it makes the criticism bearable! But most of all, it conveys the notion that the Leader is there to serve. That’s the deal: you’re the boss, king or queen of the castle, numero uno; but the purpose of it all has to be grounded in the humility of service.

So, in a sense, your own feelings should be, need to be, relegated. Its “their”—i.e., the people’s—feelings that matter.

And there is one thing—in addition to all the obvious things like they think you know what you’re doing—which is worth a special mention. A country needs its spirits kept high.

A Leader needs to generate optimism.

No one wants to get on a plane with a depressed pilot. You want the person in charge of the plane to look like they have something to live for. They need to exude confidence, not anxiety.

People always remember the “blood, sweat and tears” part of the famous Churchill speech. And it’s true he was explaining what a huge challenge we were facing. But it was all in the context of: we’re going to win. At the end will be victory. The odds are mighty against us, but we will overcome.

Government is, of course, a serious business—or, at least, it should be. And because Leaders are engaged in it, dealing with issues of huge material importance to people, they can forget that for the most part, people don’t really want to think a lot about politics or government. Political activists—who do think a lot about politics and government—often fail to understand this, or, if they understand it, are somewhat disapproving of the public’s general uninterest in their chosen obsession.

At the same time, never underestimate the people’s desire for enjoyment, for pleasure, for entertainment. People “just wanna have fun” in the words of the song. OK, I am exaggerating to make a point. But the point is an important one, which is that the seriousness of the business of governing, the difficult decisions which need to be made, the necessity of explaining the gravity of it all, must take account of the reality of human nature.

There is a wonderful description in Margaret MacMillan’s book *Peacemakers*—about the negotiations held in Paris in 1919 to settle the issues arising out of the First World War—of how, despite the world- and nation-changing debates that were taking place, and the vastness of the matters at stake—the people who descended on Paris and the Parisians themselves still found ample time for fun. Theatres reopened, races recommenced at St. Cloud, new and daring dances and musicals were performed, and people, released from the horrors of war, had affairs and made love with all the passion and indulgence of which human beings are capable. Old inhibitions were loosened. Elinor Glyn, a famous romantic novelist of the time, wrote—rather disapprovingly it has to be said—of how: “Vice is rampant in Paris ... Lesbians dine openly in groups of six sometimes, at Larue’s. Men are the same.” Even the Leaders—President

Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau—were prevailed upon to go out and relax.

So, when approaching the unavoidably sobering and occasionally dark business of government, leave a little space for some light and laughter.

This book has been about leadership in government. But the very idea of leadership assumes someone is following. And for people to follow, they need to believe the Leader is leading somewhere worth being led to. That their lives will be better, their nation better, the future better.

Indeed, the fact that it is a privilege to be the Leader should lend itself to optimism. You're in the position you have striven for. All things are possible within reason. Whether the nation advances is in your hands.

Of course, the test is ultimately if, together, Leader and people succeed. But you have an enlarged prospect of success if you start with a spirit which uplifts. Which is grounded in the humility that should accompany the privilege of leading and which ideally the Leader should naturally possess. Because, if it's not there by nature, it will be taught by experience.

Acknowledgements

This book is about leadership: how Leaders translate great ideas into delivery. I confess, though, that in my case it has taken quite a while to go from what I hope was a good idea to a delivered book. It's been a labor of love and one I would not have been able to complete without the help of the extraordinary team around me—in particular Daniel Sleat, who helped me with the research for this book. I would also like to thank everyone who works at my institute—which now operates in almost forty countries around the world and employs nearly 1,000 staff. They are an exceptional group of talented people dedicated to serving political leaders and governments.

At Penguin Random House, I would like to thank my publisher, Nigel Wilcockson. For reasons you won't need me to elaborate upon, he has come to be known in the office as “long-suffering Nigel.” I am deeply grateful to him. Gail Rebuck, chair of Penguin Random House UK, also gave incredibly valuable advice on how to improve the text.

The lessons I draw in the book are from my experience both in office and since leaving Number Ten. Above, I thank the excellent staff at TBI who work supporting leaders around the world on strategy, policy, and delivery. Here, I want to thank the incredible ministers and dedicated people I had with me in government. It is thanks to them that there are the incredible achievements from our time in office to refer to.

Finally, a special thanks to all the leaders around the world I have been lucky enough to work with since leaving office. It has been, and remains, a privilege to engage with so many inspiring people on the front line of politics, working tirelessly to deliver improvements in the lives of their citizens.

Index

The page numbers in this index refer to the printed version of the book. Each link will take you to the beginning of the corresponding print page. You may need to scroll forward from that location to find the corresponding reference on your e-reader.

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#)
[Y](#) [Z](#)

A

accountability, [48](#)

Addison, Joseph, [237](#)

Afghanistan, [189](#), [274](#)

Africa

agriculture in, [61–2](#), [118](#)

Chinese investment in, [114–15](#), [191](#), [204](#)

conflict in, [101–3](#), [192](#), [254](#)

industrial strategies in, [61–2](#)

infrastructure in, [85–6](#), [115](#)

narratives in, [233–4](#)

social media in, [254](#), [289](#)

technology in, [120–21](#), [168](#), [179](#)

US investment in, [191](#), [204](#)

African Union, [205](#)

agriculture, [29](#), [61](#), [117–18](#), [167](#), [181](#)

aid, *see* [international development](#)

Albania, [232](#)

algorithms, [157–8](#)

Alibaba, [172](#)

Amazon, [66](#), [171](#), [172](#)

ambition, [41](#), [293–9](#)

Andrews, Julie, [8](#)

Apple, [66](#), [157](#), [172](#)

Argentina, [133](#)

artificial intelligence, [30](#), [61](#), [129](#), [147](#), [152–62](#), [163–4](#), [169](#), [202](#)

disruption, [180](#), [182](#)

infrastructure and, [172–3](#)

ASEAN, [205](#)

asylum seekers, [76](#), [79](#), [196](#)

Aung San Suu Kyi, [274–6](#)

Australia, [204](#)

authenticity, [299](#)

autocracies, [47](#), [51–2](#), [262](#), [319](#), [323](#)

B

Baath Party, [133](#)

Baker, James, [223](#)

bandwidth, [19](#)

Barber, Michael, [14](#)

Bell Labs, [30](#), [155](#), [159](#)

Berlin Wall, fall of (1989), [231](#)

Berlusconi, Silvio, [195](#)

Berners-Lee, Tim, [157](#)

Biden, Joe, [95](#), [198](#)

billionaires, [279](#)

biometric ID, [28](#), [72](#), [86](#), [173–4](#)

“Bloody Sunday” (1972), [248](#)

Blunkett, David, [195–6](#)

Boko Haram, [100](#)

Boole, George, [154](#)

Brazil, [133](#)

Brexit, [6](#), [19](#), [61](#), [66](#), [287–8](#)

Brown, Gordon, [261](#)

Bukele, Nayib, [106](#)

“bully pulpit,” [313–14](#)

bureaucracies, [8–9](#), [37](#), [39–43](#), [77](#), [173–4](#), [182](#)

Burundi, [xiv](#)

BYD, [179](#)

C

Cabinet meetings, [40](#)

Calais, France, [196](#)

Cameron, David, [288](#)

campaigning, [7](#), [17–19](#), [92](#)

capability vs popularity, [321](#)

car industry, [113](#), [179](#)

Carroll, Lewis, [1](#)

Catholicism, [17–18](#)

cell phones, [156](#)

centrist politics, [56](#)

change-making, [xx](#), [4](#), [65–73](#), [83–7](#)

ChatGPT, [147](#), [172](#)

children's services, [6](#)

China, [52–4](#), [66](#), [109–10](#), [123](#), [201–7](#), [214](#), [215](#), [286](#)

Africa, investment in, [114–15](#), [191](#), [204](#)

Covid-19 pandemic (2019–23), [52–4](#)

Deng's leadership (1978–89), [138–9](#)

Industrial Revolution and, [163](#)

One Belt One Road (2013–present), [191](#)

Russia, relations with, [203](#), [204](#), [211–12](#)

Saudi Arabia, relations with, [198](#)

Taiwan, relations with, [191](#), [212](#)

technology revolution, [163](#), [172](#), [179](#), [202](#)

United States, relations with, [191](#), [198](#), [199](#), [201–7](#), [210](#), [211–12](#)

WTO accession (2001), [109–10](#)

Churchill, Winston, [237](#), [298](#), [326](#)

Cisco, [66](#)

Civil Service, [8–9](#), [18–19](#), [21](#), [37](#), [39–43](#), [77](#), [182](#)

CK-12 Foundation, [169](#)

Clemenceau, Georges, [327](#)

climate change, [66](#), [145–6](#), [152](#), [161](#), [179](#), [192](#), [203](#), [216](#)

Clinton, Bill, [10](#), [91](#), [93](#), [248–9](#)

cliques, [310](#)

cloud computing, [158](#), [174](#)

Colombia, [xiv](#), [133](#)

common law, [125](#)

communications, [7](#), [12](#), [14](#), [227–56](#)

criticism and, [237–42](#)

narratives, [2](#), [7](#), [69](#), [86](#), [145](#), [229–35](#)

scandals, [243–9](#)

social media, [50](#), [235](#), [251–6](#)

strategic, [229–35](#)

computers, [154–61](#)

confidence, [326](#)

Conservative Party, [90](#), [134–5](#), [315](#)

conspiracy theories, [9](#), [253](#), [260–64](#)

constituency, [307–11](#)

Cooper, Martin, [156](#)

corruption, [48](#), [51](#), [116](#), [123](#), [126](#), [168](#), [174](#)

cost of living crisis (2021–present), [59–60](#), [62](#)

country comparison exercise, [xiv](#)

Covid-19 pandemic (2019–23), [24–5](#), [53](#), [66–8](#), [77](#), [124](#), [148](#), [152](#),
[289–90](#)

Partygate scandal (2021–2), [246–7](#)

crime, [26](#), [50](#), [91](#), [99](#), [104–7](#), [129](#), [145](#), [167](#), [169](#), [182](#)

criticism, [237–42](#)

cryptocurrency, [151–2](#)

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), [223](#)

culture wars, [56](#), [146](#)

D

data sovereignty, [174](#)

Davies, Donald, [156](#)

de Gaulle, Charles, [298](#)

deep state, [262–3](#)

DeepMind, [172](#)

Deliverology (Barber), [14](#)

delivery, [14](#), [30](#), [47–56](#), [75–81](#), [91](#), [275](#)

suivi, le, [75–81](#)

Delivery Unit concept, [14](#), [30](#), [76](#), [78–81](#)

democracy, [47–56](#)

change-making and, [4–5](#)

continuity in policy, [4–5](#), [322](#)

deep state and, [262–3](#)

delivery and, [47–56](#)

extremism and, [101–3](#)

love and, [291](#)

narratives and, [234](#)

regime change and, [274](#)

rule of law and, [48](#), [130](#)

scandals and, [243](#)

social media and, [254](#)

term limits, [319–20](#)

Deng Xiaoping, [138–9](#)

Department for International Development, [189](#)

derangement, [177–83](#)

developed countries

climate change in, [146](#)
economic policy in, [109](#), [111](#), [115](#), [118](#)
extremism in, [102](#)
law and order in, [104](#), [105](#)
rule of law in, [123](#), [128](#)
technology revolution in, [145](#), [146](#)

developing countries

agriculture in, [29](#), [114](#), [117–18](#)
climate change in, [146](#)
delivery in, [49](#), [51](#)
economic policy in, [114–18](#)
education in, [119–20](#)
electricity access in, [85](#), [117](#), [168](#)
extremism in, [101–3](#)
foreign policy and, [189](#), [191–3](#)
infrastructure in, [115–18](#)
law and order in, [105](#)
rule of law and, [123](#), [125](#), [126–8](#)
technology revolution in, [145](#), [146](#), [167–8](#)

Devil joke, [17–18](#)

devolution of power, [8–9](#)

Diana, Princess of Wales, [262](#)

digital ID, [28](#), [72](#), [86](#), [173–4](#)

digitisation, [28](#), [72](#), [77](#), [86](#)

diseases, [169](#)

Disraeli, Benjamin, [279](#)

disruption, [177–83](#)

drones, [167](#)

E

economic policy, [91–2](#), [99](#), [109–21](#)

education, [xii](#), [xiii](#), [6](#), [20](#), [26](#), [29](#), [37](#), [70–72](#), [76](#)

labour markets and, [119–20](#)

technology revolution and, [148](#), [166](#), [167](#), [169](#), [182](#)

ego, [xxi](#)

Egypt, [133](#)

El Salvador, [106](#)

elections, [7](#), [17–19](#), [89–95](#), [124](#)

1983 general election, [296–7](#)

1997 general election, [232–3](#)

electric vehicles, [72](#), [179](#)

electricity, [85](#), [117](#), [168](#)

Ellison, Larry, [181](#)

emotion, [265](#), [299](#), [305](#)

emotional brain, [152–3](#)

enemies, [301–6](#)

energy sector, [59–60](#), [62](#), [117](#), [126](#), [193](#)

Estonia, [129](#), [148](#)

Ethiopia, [100](#), [116](#), [118](#)

European Council, [189–90](#)

European Union

- China, relations with, [204](#), [205](#)
- Eastern enlargement (2004; 2007), [110](#), [127](#), [231](#), [232](#)
- foreign policy, [193](#), [204](#), [205](#)
- technology revolution, [163](#)
- UK, relations with, [5](#), [6](#), [19](#), [61](#), [66](#), [90](#), [189–90](#), [287–8](#)

Euroscepticism, [90](#), [189](#)

Exodus, [230](#), [255](#)

experience, [xv–xvi](#), [7–8](#), [280](#)

extremism, [66](#), [100–103](#), [192](#), [233](#)

Exxon, [66](#)

F

facial recognition, [72](#)

Fairchild Semiconductor, [156](#)

family, [269](#)

far right, [100](#)

Farage, Nigel, [288](#)

fascism, [133](#)

fear, [285–6](#), [291](#)

financial crisis (2007–8), [6](#), [50](#), [111](#)

Finland, [191](#)

football, [8](#)

Ford, Henry, [xix](#)

foreign policy, [5](#), [185–225](#)

consistency and, [187–93](#)

domestic policy and, [209–17](#)

negotiation, [219–25](#)

personal relationships and, [195–200](#)

USA–China rivalry and, [201–7](#), [210](#)

four P's, [17](#)

France, [61](#), [127](#), [195–6](#), [254](#), [289](#), [298](#)

friendships, [267–9](#)

Fukushima disaster (2011), [62](#)

G

G7, [191](#)

G8, [66](#)

gas, [193](#)

gay rights, [6](#)

Gaza War (2023–), [191](#), [212–14](#)

Gemini, [173](#)

General Electric, [66](#)

generalists, [36](#), [39–40](#)

Genghis Khan, [10–11](#)

Germany, [62](#)

Glyn, Elinor, [327](#)

Good Friday Agreement (1998), [224](#), [325](#)

Google, [157](#), [171](#), [172](#), [173](#)

Gorbachev, Mikhail, [298](#)

Grok, [173](#)

Gulf States, [xiv](#), [66](#), [173](#), [188](#)

H

Hackney, London, [70](#)

Hamas, [213](#)

Healey, Denis, [267](#)

healthcare, [xii](#), [3](#), [6](#), [20](#), [26](#), [29](#), [70–72](#), [76](#), [91](#), [136](#), [145](#)

artificial intelligence and, [165–6](#), [167](#)

technology revolution and, [168](#), [182](#)

hinterland, [265–70](#)

HIV/AIDS, [169](#)

hubris, [271–7](#)

human rights, [49](#), [197](#), [198](#), [205](#)

humiliation, [104](#)

humility, [xii](#), [92](#), [275](#), [281](#), [325](#), [328](#)

Hussein, Saddam, [274](#)

I

Icarus, [277](#)

ideology, [133–40](#)

immigration, [27–8](#), [50](#), [56](#), [102](#), [136](#), [192](#), [286–7](#)

asylum seekers, [76](#), [79](#), [196](#)

India, [66](#), [85](#), [173](#), [206](#), [214](#), [216](#)

Indonesia, [118](#), [121](#), [148](#)

Industrial Revolution (c. 1760–1840), [143](#), [147–9](#), [164](#)

industrial strategies, [61](#), [113](#), [114–21](#)

inflation, [273](#)

infrastructure, [21](#), [29](#), [86](#), [114–16](#)

technology revolution and, [171–6](#)

innovation, [48](#), [51](#), [70](#), [119](#), [126](#), [178](#)

inquiries, [247–8](#)

Intel, [66](#)

international development, [49](#), [101](#), [189](#), [190](#)

International Monetary Fund (IMF), [86](#), [216](#)

internet, [157](#)

investment, [107](#), [111–12](#), [115](#), [125](#)

Iran, [203](#), [204](#), [211](#), [213](#)

Iraq, [133](#), [189](#), [274](#), [315](#)

Islam, [213–14](#), [216](#)

Islamism, [66](#), [100–103](#), [192](#), [213–14](#), [216](#), [276](#)

Israel, [65](#), [191](#), [212–14](#), [221](#)

Italy, [195](#)

J

Japan, [62](#), [113](#), [164](#), [204](#)

Jenkins, Roy, [282](#)

jihadism, [66](#), [100–103](#), [192](#), [276](#)

Jobs, Steve, [xix](#)

Johnson, Boris, [246–7](#), [288](#)

Jokowi, [118](#), [121](#), [272](#)

judicial systems, [48](#), [123–31](#), [145](#), [167](#)

K

karma, [299](#)

Kennan, George, [1](#)

Kennedy, John F., [223](#)

Kenya, [148](#)

Keynes, John Maynard, [62](#)

Khan Academy, [169](#)

Khashoggi, Jamal, [198](#)

al-Khwarizmi, [157](#)

King and I, The (1956 film), [84](#)

Kissinger, Henry, [199](#), [316–17](#)

knowledge, [279–83](#)

Kuwait, [xiv](#)

L

labour laws, [118](#)

Labour Party, [6](#), [89–90](#), [93](#), [104](#), [148](#), [296–7](#), [315–16](#)

New Labour, [6](#), [90](#), [135](#), [232–3](#), [315](#)

large language models (LLMs), [159–61](#), [173](#)

Latin America, [133](#), [205](#)

law and order, [xii](#), [6](#), [26](#), [50](#), [72](#), [91](#), [99](#), [104–7](#), [169](#)

judicial systems, [123–31](#), [145](#), [167](#)

leaving, [319–24](#)

Lee Kuan Yew, [xx](#), [29](#), [239](#)

legacy, [313–17](#)

Libya, [101](#)

life sciences, [30](#), [61](#), [72](#)

Lincoln, Abraham, [237](#)

living standards, [48](#), [50](#)

Lloyd George, David, [327](#)

London Olympics (2012), [195](#), [325](#)

long-term change, [83–7](#)

love, [285](#), [291](#)

Luddite movement (1811–17), [149](#)

M

MacMillan, Margaret, [327](#)

Macron, Emmanuel, [298](#)

Magna Carta (1215), [128–9](#)

Major, John, [5](#)

Malaysia, [xiv](#)

managed democracies, [47](#), [51–2](#)

Mandela, Nelson, [xx](#), [275](#), [298](#)

Mandelson, Peter, [231](#)

manifestos, [17–19](#)

mantras, [92](#)

McKinsey, [76](#)

media, [128](#), [251–6](#)

Meta, [173](#)

Mexico, [133](#)

Microsoft, [66](#), [171](#), [172](#)

Middle East

 conflict in, [192](#), [212–14](#), [221–2](#), [224](#)

 ideology in, [133](#)

 narrative in, [233](#)

 USA–China rivalry and, [204](#)

middle-income countries, [118](#)

Militant Tendency, [296](#)

minimum wage, [6](#), [76](#), [86](#), [119](#), [315](#)

Mistral, [173](#)

Mitchell, Joni, [281](#)

Modi, Narendra, [85](#)

Moore, Gordon, [156](#)

Moore's Law, [156](#), [158](#), [159–60](#)

Moses, [230](#), [255](#)

Motorola, [156](#)

Mozambique, [103](#)

multipolarity, [188](#), [190](#), [215](#)

Musk, Elon, [77](#), [173](#), [180](#)

Muslim Brotherhood, [213](#)

Muslim communities, [212–14](#)

Myanmar, [xiv](#), [274–6](#)

N

narratives, [2](#), [7](#), [69](#), [86](#), [145](#), [229–35](#)

NASA, [77](#), [179](#)

Nasser, Gamal Abdel, [133](#)

National Health Service (NHS), [30](#), [70–71](#), [144](#), [165–6](#), [287](#)

nationalism, [135](#), [146](#)

 economic, [113](#)

 policy, [29](#)

NATO, [191](#), [204](#)

natural gas, [193](#)

nemesis, [271–7](#)

neutral countries, [215](#)

New Labour, [6](#), [90](#), [135](#), [232–3](#), [315](#)

NGOs, [49](#), [101](#), [196](#), [198](#)

Niebuhr, Reinhold, [239–40](#)

Nigeria, [100](#)

Nissan, [113](#)

Nixon, Richard, [199](#), [316–17](#)

Nokia, [66](#)

North Korea, [xiv](#), [203](#), [211](#), [212](#), [291](#)

Northern Ireland, [221](#), [224](#), [248](#), [315](#), [325](#)

NTT Docomo, [66](#)

nuclear power, [62](#)

nuclear weapons, [211](#), [212](#)

NVIDIA, [66](#)

O

objectives and key results (OKRs), [79](#)

Olympic Games, [195](#), [325](#)

one-siding, [253](#)

open house, [12–13](#)

OpenAI, [173](#)

opinion polls, [91](#)

oppositions, [90](#)

optimism, [326–8](#)

Oracle, [171](#), [181](#)

Osborne, George, [288](#)

P

Pakistan, [263](#)

Palestine, [191](#), [212–14](#)

paranoia, [259–64](#)

Partygate (2021–2), [246–7](#)

Peacemakers (MacMillan), [327](#)

pensions, [273](#)

Peres, Shimon, [65](#)

performance management, [17](#), [40](#)

personal time, [13](#)

personnel, [17](#), [33–8](#)

Pfizer, [66](#)

pharmaceutical industry, [165](#)

Pilate, Pontius, [286](#)

planning, [1–6](#), [91](#)

Plato, [1](#)

Poland, [xiv](#), [110](#), [231–2](#)

policy, [14](#), [17](#), [23–31](#)

 economic, [91–2](#), [99](#), [109–21](#)

 ideology and, [133–40](#)

 rule of law and, [123–31](#)

 security, [99–107](#)

Policy Unit, [14](#), [30](#)

popularity vs capability, [321](#)

populism, [25](#), [50–51](#), [56](#), [101](#), [128](#), [135](#), [238–9](#), [287](#)

ports, [116](#)

practicality, [137–8](#)

Premier League, [8](#)

pride, [271](#)

Prime Minister's Questions, [12](#), [81](#)

prioritisation, [17–22](#), [78–9](#)

private enterprise, [5](#), [48](#), [77](#)

process, [40](#), [182](#)

progressive left, [56](#), [99](#), [136](#), [213](#), [214](#)

public sector, [21](#), [41](#), [72](#), [76](#), [77](#)

public services, [xii–xiii](#), [3](#), [50](#), [91](#), [145](#)

Putin, Vladimir, [54–5](#), [204](#)

Q

Qatar, [116](#)

qualifications, [xv](#), [7–8](#), [280](#)

quick wins, [83–7](#)

R

radicalism, [137–8](#)

Reagan, Ronald, [95](#)

respect, [285–91](#)

robotics, [160–61](#)

Rohingya people, [274](#)

Roosevelt, Theodore (Teddy), [313](#)

Royal Dutch Shell, [66](#)

rule of law, [48](#), [123–31](#)

Russia, [54–5](#), [66](#), [102](#), [204](#), [210–12](#)

China, relations with, [203](#), [204](#), [211–12](#)

disinformation campaigns, [254](#), [289](#)

Ukraine War (2022–present), [52](#), [60](#), [100](#), [188](#), [191](#), [197](#), [203](#),
[204](#), [210–12](#)

ruthlessness, [305](#)

Rwanda, [xiv](#), [116](#)

S

Sahel region, [101–2](#), [192](#), [254](#), [289](#)

Sarkozy, Nicolas, [195–6](#)

Saudi Arabia, [100](#), [197–8](#)

Saville Inquiry (2010), [248](#)

scandals, [243–9](#)

scheduling, [10–13](#)

Schmidt, Helmut, [1–2](#)

scientific brain, [152–3](#)

security, [99–107](#)

Sedgefield, County Durham, [296–7](#)

Senegal, [148](#)

September 11 attacks (2001), [66](#), [80](#), [100](#), [189](#), [273](#), [315](#)

“Serenity Prayer” (Niebuhr), [239–40](#)

“Ship of State,” [1](#)

short-termism, [24](#), [50](#)

Sierra Leone, [118](#)

Silicon Valley, [30](#)

silos, [42](#)

Singapore, [xx](#), [29](#), [30](#), [107](#), [116](#), [173](#), [239](#)

smart cities, [72](#)

smartphones, [157](#), [168](#), [234](#)

Smith, John, [297](#)

smuggling, [169](#)

social care, [xii](#), [xiii](#)

social media, [50](#), [235](#), [251–6](#), [260–61](#), [289](#)

socialism, [133–4](#), [136](#)

soft power, [189](#)

Somalia, [101](#)

South East Asia, [110](#), [121](#), [191](#)

South Korea, [xiv](#), [29](#), [30](#), [110](#)

Soviet Union, [54](#), [77](#), [110](#), [127](#), [231](#), [298](#)

SpaceX, [179](#)

specialists, [35–6](#), [39](#), [80](#)

St. Peter and the Devil joke, [17–18](#)

Starlink, [180](#)

status quo, [24](#), [65](#)

Strategic Communications Unit, [14](#)

strategy, [14](#), [30](#), [57–63](#), [91](#)

strategy communications, [229–35](#)

Strategy Unit, [14](#), [30](#)

strong centre, [7–15](#)

“strongman” leadership, [47](#), [52](#), [54–6](#)

subsidies, [59](#), [76](#), [86](#), [168](#)

succession planning, [321](#)

Sudan, [192](#)

suivi, le, [75–81](#), [112–13](#)

Sweden, [191](#)

Syria, [133](#)

T

tactics, [58–60](#), [229](#)

Taiwan, [30](#), [191](#), [212](#)

taxation, [xii](#), [5](#), [50](#), [145](#)

technocracy, [14](#), [69](#), [71](#), [137](#), [143–4](#)

technology revolution, [30](#), [61](#), [66](#), [72–3](#), [86](#), [117](#), [126–7](#), [141–83](#)

 application, [163–70](#)

 disruption, [177–83](#)

 infrastructure, [171–6](#)

 momentum, [68](#), [151–61](#)

telecoms, [126–7](#)

Tencent, [172](#)

terrorism, [66](#), [80](#), [100–103](#), [192](#), [273–4](#), [276](#), [315](#)

Thatcher, Margaret, [5](#), [90](#), [189](#), [298](#)

Through the Looking-Glass (Carroll), [1](#)

Tigray, Ethiopia [100](#)

Tony Blair Institute, [110](#), [126](#), [167](#), [181](#), [234](#)

tourism, [107](#)

transparency, [48–9](#), [51](#)

transport, [91](#)

Trump, Donald, [56](#)

Truss, Liz, [111](#)

trust, [48–9](#), [51](#), [286–91](#)

tuberculosis, [169](#)

turning points, [xiv–xv](#)

U

Ukraine

Poland, comparison with, [xiv](#), [231–2](#)

Russian War (2022–present), [52](#), [60](#), [100](#), [188](#), [191](#), [197](#), [203](#),
[204](#), [210–12](#)

United Arab Emirates, [30](#), [100](#), [116](#), [173](#)

United Kingdom

artificial intelligence in, [163](#)

Brexit, [6](#), [19](#), [61](#), [66](#), [287–8](#)

car industry, [113](#)

cost of living crisis (2021–present), [59](#)

Covid-19 crisis (2020–23), [24–5](#), [77](#)

education in, [70](#), [72](#)

EU, relations with, [5](#), [6](#), [19](#), [61](#), [66](#), [90](#), [189–90](#)

fuel crisis (2000), [273](#)

healthcare in, [70–72](#), [144](#), [165–6](#), [287](#)

immigration in, [287](#)

instability in, [50](#)

life sciences in, [30](#), [61](#), [72](#)

Partygate (2021–2), [246–7](#)

rule of law in, [124–5](#), [129](#)

Truss mini-budget (2022), [111](#)

universities, [119](#)

USA, relations with, [5](#), [189](#)

War on Terror (2001–21), [189](#), [273–4](#), [276](#), [315](#)

United Nations, [203](#), [211](#), [216](#)

United States, [201–7](#), [214](#), [285–6](#)

Africa, investment in, [191](#), [204](#)

artificial intelligence in, [163](#)

China, relations with, [191](#), [198](#), [199](#), [201–7](#), [210](#)

Clinton impeachment (1998), [249](#)

Covid-19 crisis (2020–23), [77](#)

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), [223](#)

democracy in, [48](#), [50](#), [56](#)

education in, [71](#)

immigration in, [287](#)

industrial policy, [61](#)

Middle East peace process, [221–2](#)

NASA, [77](#), [179](#)

populism in, [50](#), [56](#)

Saudi Arabia, relations with, [198](#)

September 11 attacks (2001), [66](#), [80](#), [100](#), [189](#), [273](#), [315](#)

Silicon Valley, [30](#)

UK, relations with, [5](#), [189](#)

universities, [119](#)

War on Terror (2001–21), [66](#), [100](#), [189](#), [273–4](#), [276](#), [315](#)

Watergate scandal (1972–4), [316–17](#)

universities, [119](#), [148](#)

V

Venezuela, [xiv](#), [133](#)

vested interests, [24](#)

victimhood, [136](#)

W

Wagner Group, [102](#)

Walmart, [66](#)

War on Terror (2001–21), [66](#), [100](#), [189](#), [273–4](#), [276](#), [315](#)

Watergate scandal (1972–4), [316–17](#)

welfare, [xii](#), [xiii](#), [3](#), [6](#), [50](#), [76](#), [136](#), [168](#)

Wilson, Woodrow, [327](#)

“winner takes all,” [224](#), [279](#)

World Bank, [121](#), [216](#)

World Trade Organization (WTO), [109](#), [216](#)

Wygall, Winnifred, [239–40](#)

Y

Yemen, [100](#)**Z**

zero-sum games, [224](#), [279](#)

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X
Y Z

Read an excerpt from

A Journey

My Political Life

By Tony Blair

Available from Vintage Books

INTRODUCTION TO THE VINTAGE EDITION

It's almost a year since the hardcover edition of this book was published. So much has happened, not least in the region where I spend so much time—the Middle East. Following the financial crisis, there have also been developments in Europe and the U.S. that merit comment.

This introduction plainly connects to the last chapter of the book, but here I develop an argument only touched on there: the traditional left/right divide of Western politics still dominates much of our political discourse, yet it is an essentially twentieth-century construct that is now not only increasingly redundant, it is an obstruction to new ideas and sound policy.

This is not to say that ideals or values no longer matter—they matter hugely, and the progressive/conservative divide (a more modern version of left/right) still has relevance. What is more, that divide offers a big opportunity for progressive politics since the spirit of the times is meritocratic and modernising. Yet such labels have to be treated with caution. I remain unequivocally on the progressive side of politics, but I am fiscally more conservative, and on markets, liberal. Many conservatives are today socially liberal, in favour of gay rights and passionate advocates of women's equality. A foreign policy of liberal interventionism has its detractors and supporters in both camps.

When it comes to policy, the challenge today is efficacy, not ideology. People want government that works, that is above all effective in making change. To achieve this, governments have to liberate themselves from ideology based on left/right and embrace new ways of thinking that cross the traditional party lines. In pursuit of this objective, I argue that a more relevant political divide for the twenty-first century is “open vs. closed”. It defines attitudes to globalisation; to culture and identity; and to change. The open-

minded see globalisation as an opportunity; the closed-minded as a threat, a process driven by greed and big business, in which we are helpless pawns. The open-minded are accepting of those of different faiths and cultures; the closed-minded regard them as alien and corrupting. Above all, the open-minded embrace new ideas and change, seeing the potential for advancement; the closed-minded tend to defend the status quo. This divide zigzags across traditional politics. You find those who call themselves progressives and conservatives on both sides of the debates about immigration, free trade and energy, for example.

The twenty-first century will belong to those who by instinct and education are open to the world as it changes, and are prepared to modernise and think anew. This open-minded attitude is not just about the way we view the world; it is intrinsic to whether the West regains its sense of self-confidence and self-belief. There is, at present, and for reasons that are completely comprehensible, an acute pessimism in the West. Any young graduate seeking work can tell you how tough it is. For those without qualifications, jobs are often low paid or highly insecure. Add to this alarm over extremism, anger at what appears to be uncontrolled immigration, and the gathering sense that new powers, notably China, are emerging to take our place, and it is easy to see why this pessimism is so rampant.

It is, however, misguided and unnecessary. We have been through tough times before—actually much tougher—and survived and prospered. It's true new powers are emerging. But ask the immigrants why they prefer our way of life. If these new powers succeed, it will be at least as much by emulation as by difference.

For example, I believe that this century will see Africans seize their destiny in their own hands and triumph over their adversities. The world needs what they have to offer in raw materials, commodities and agriculture. There is a new generation of smart, capable leaders coming to the fore, but whether and how fast they succeed will depend to a significant extent on the degree to which they take the best lessons of governance from us and apply them.

They still look to us, and rightly so. And the Middle East? It turns out they do want democracy.

Above all, we are the birthplace of the open-minded. We were the leaders in ideas; and to a large extent we still are. We were the creative ones, the innovators, the radical reformers of the status quo, not just in economics, governance, social progress but in thought, and other disciplines whose ideas define the future. Our problem is not our situation but ourselves. Do we still want to lead the world? Do we still want to be led by leaders capable of harnessing that innate power of creativity?

The world needs our leadership for a very simple reason: while our values may have been nurtured in the West, their appeal and their ownership is vested in humanity. Liberty, justice, the people above the government not the government above the people: these are the values we forged over centuries and they represent the steadfast evolution of human progress.

At present we have this curious jumble of paradoxes and contradictions: the world needs our leadership but we are fearful of leading; our politics is organised according to distinctions of left vs. right that, in their most crude form, the people have long since moved on from; and though the future belongs to the optimistic and open-minded, we are in danger of being defeatist and closed-minded.

What should leaders do? When people ask me about leadership, I can talk about character, temperament and attitude, about “doing the right thing” and having “the right stuff”, all of which is important. But sometimes I think that the hardest thing is getting the right answer. This is harder still in an era of uniquely low predictability.

The oddest yet most interesting thing about being an ex-leader is how much I did not know when I was a leader, how much there is to learn about the world and how endlessly fascinating are the processes of change going on within it. I’ve been to the Middle East twelve times in the last few months and over sixty times since leaving office. I travel regularly to China and of course to the U.S. I have seen for myself that the U.S. is more than New York and

Washington, as China is more than Beijing and Shanghai. I've learned about Indonesia and Malaysia, and started to know Mexico, Brazil and Colombia, countries I had barely visited before. I also spend time in Africa.

The relief from the day-to-day pressure of office has given me space to analyse. The memory of what it was really like to lead means that I retain real respect for those who assume the mantle of leadership. I know it is a lot easier to give the advice than to take the decision.

Occasionally I even wonder if I became a leader too young. Of course, nowadays we tend to like our leaders younger. They look better, seem more dynamic, have a positive energy that stimulates in the electorate a positive glow; but in my case judgement and experience have deepened with age. In a curious way, as a younger leader I was better able to articulate the bright, new horizon; but as a more mature leader I was better able to get there. (Though being now two years off sixty as I write this, I suppose I would say that.)

I now feel a huge pulse of urgency about our situation. This is not simply the onset of age or the musings of a global wanderer—indeed I have never felt more adrenalin or energy—it is that the key to our success today is to analyse, understand, and then be part of the way the world is changing. When times are hard, the inclination is to be introspective. But it is in the nature of these times that in order to advance, we have to be global.

The chief characteristic of today's world is the speed of change, driven by technology. When I was growing up, technological advance was often to do with how we made things. It was about how we travelled—by car or plane—and then about how we got the news. In the 1960s and 1970s, we had very standard ways of getting information. There were major news channels that everyone shared. The choices we could make were limited by the technology, and we depended on government for a range of decisions only they could make.

The Internet has changed that world. We have the power in our own hands to communicate, interact and obtain information. The result is transformative. We don't just work differently, we live and

think differently. There is the instantaneous transmission not only of news, but of thoughts, moods, opinions and sentiment.

The world is ever more interdependent. OK, that's a cliché now, but what isn't grasped are the consequences of it. Take the financial crisis—significant for many reasons, but perhaps most importantly as the most dramatic demonstration of what it means to live in a truly interdependent global financial market. Those countries most deeply wired into that global market suffered for it. Those who avoided it—very few—could do so both because their banks were far more tightly controlled but also because they lagged behind the rest of the world in financial innovation (characteristics which themselves bring a separate raft of problems associated with them). And crisis did not spread simply as a result of rational analysis, by market participants, of failing financial products; rather, market sentiment gathered pace and rolled into tidal waves of panic, shifting perceptions of both the financial system as well as individual nations' economic stability.

This linkage isn't only financial. Political, cultural and social ideas are also communicated in real time and have global reach and power. The uprisings in the Middle East are partly the product of the new social media's ability to pass information within a country; but also the global reaction to events bouncing back into the national political debate, fuelling and shaping it. All of this is accelerating the pace of change. Leaders are taking decisions against a background of uncertainty and change that both constantly alter that background and constrain enormously what any one country on its own can do to manage the consequences.

Added to all this is the rise of China, and India, and others not far behind. The most elusive thing in any discussion of China is to get your head round its size. We know it's big, has 1.3 billion people, and is now a power; but none of that conveys adequately the immensity of its impact on us. If you shut down the whole of the UK—the fifth largest economy in the world—so that it emitted no greenhouse gas emissions whatsoever, the rise in emissions from the Chinese economy would make up the difference in under two years. We debate, rightly, the third runway at Heathrow, on environmental

grounds; China will build seventy new international airports in the next decade. By 2030 there will be 300 commercial airports. The USA has nine, maybe ten cities with a population of over a million, while the EU has around twenty; China has over 160. Think how different Finland is from Greece, or even Germany and Italy, the British and the Spanish. In Western Europe there are great differences of culture, ethnicity and habits. Now think of that multiplied by three. Think of sixty different Chinese ethnic groupings. Think of hundreds of millions of Chinese industrialised in the last twenty years which has produced China's transformation economically and politically. Then think of the same again in the next twenty. You start to get some idea of the scale, complexity and depth of change that China's development is going to bring. Not a single aspect of our lives will be untouched by it. From the environment, to the production of cheap consumer goods we take for granted, to the way the world's commodities are mined and used, China's rise will transform our lives.

India's population is 1.2 billion and rising. Indonesia has three times the number of people as Germany. Brazil and Russia are going to be giants of the world economy. All these nations face serious challenges, of course, but the trend is unmistakable and irreversible: the geopolitics of the twenty-first century will be unlike anything the modern world has seen. Our children in the West will be a generation growing up in a situation where virtually every fixed point of reference that my and my parents' generation knew has changed or is changing. Included in these fixed points of reference is traditional politics—and that is why leadership is so tough.

Of course there are voters who remain absolutely committed to traditional left/right politics—often they make most noise—but there is a swelling crowd of people who don't conform to such politics and who can determine elections. One group are those who focus as much on "cultural" questions as normal left/right politics. The Tea Party in the U.S. is a reaction to what they perceive as the dominance of a liberal elite. In Europe, you have the far right parties like that of Le Pen in France, or the new parties that have popped up in countries such as Sweden, Holland and Finland that

we used to think of as having very predictable politics. But the other group are a large, somewhat disenfranchised group of centrist voters who just distrust the simplicity of the left/right labels.

Let us try for a moment to disentangle this. At one level, given the debates in the U.S. such as the programme of cuts in Wisconsin, or in the UK about tuition fees for students, you might think it bizarre to claim left/right battles a thing of the past. Surely these are just that: left vs. right and very much with us. But that is an illusion. That is to focus on the surface noise. Look deeper and actually what has happened in this past half-century is that the left/right distinctions have become blurred. It would be too simplistic to say the left has won the battle over values and the right has won the battle over policy direction, but it is a little like that.

When I was growing up, social justice was a value of the left. Today, conservatives as well as progressives will lay claim to fairness. The argument is over who has the best policy to achieve it. Both groups say they represent “regular” people or “hard-working” families; both identify with enhanced opportunity and social mobility; both are against “elites”. The patrician Republican or Tory is in short supply and even shorter demand. Where the right are more traditionally “right” on values—abortion, gay rights, etc.—this tends to be at the base, not amongst voters.

However, on policy, we are in the course of a long steady march to a rebalancing of individual responsibility and choice with the power of the state—on taxes, welfare and public services. At first this was driven by the costs of the state, the widening of the tax base and the sense of the state taking up too much ground. Now there is a fresh driver: a desire to exercise much greater choice and individual preference—the norm in private-sector transactions—in the public sector. And all of it, of course, enhanced by the potential of technology.

What is interesting is how little this march has been arrested by the financial crisis. In 2008, it was commonly believed that the left would gain from a mess thought not just to be “of the market” but begotten by unrestricted market practices. The state was said to be back in fashion. If it was, the fashion quickly passed. European

elections and the U.S. midterms saw, if anything, a move rightwards. Even the conservative leaders in Europe today tend to be under threat from parties more to the right or on non-traditional platforms rather than from the conventional left.

Here is the point of fascination: many people voting this way don't regard themselves as going "right" on these issues. They don't view it in partisan terms. They view it practically.

This is not to say that because ideology is discredited, politics has become a game of realpolitik, everything traded and bartered and bargained in a never-ending street haggle. There's an enormous appetite for ideas and ideals. Neither does it mean that people don't want big change. They do. They know they need it and they will vote for it. It's just that they won't buy it from someone who they regard as ideologically motivated. They will pick and choose policy options. They will not conform to neat twentieth-century distinctions because experience has taught them to be wary of such things. None of this means they think small—indeed their irritation with much of what passes for political campaigning is precisely because they believe the thinking is not big enough or broad enough to change lives. They are radical, not ideological. You can call this the radical centre, though that doesn't properly describe it. Such a radicalism is not positioned between traditional left/right but above it.

And here is a strange paradox. The real challenge for leaders is how to change their countries, yet first they have to persuade their own party base, since party organisations have the ability to determine the contenders for leadership; and though the people distrust ideologically driven politics, party activists are even more wedded to them. The party battle then turns into a series of set-piece staged fights, a bit like reenactments of English or American civil wars. What comes out of it is a form of transactional politics in which the risk is that even if you start with the right answer, it's slowly whittled away into mush. Meanwhile, in the real world, this unstoppable force of change is beating down upon us, demanding something transformative in order to cope with it.

Democracy is supported for two reasons (and by the way supported the world over—no nation that is a democracy has ever chosen willingly to surrender it, and no two democracies have ever gone to war): the first is justice—it is the fairest way to choose a government; the second has been efficiency. Dictatorships, at least over time, tend to inefficiency, corruption and repression.

The challenge of modern democracy is efficacy. Not accountability, transparency or whether it is honest or not, but whether it works to deliver effective change in times that need that radical change. It is here that our traditions weigh us down. We have inherited very binary, polar two-party politics or, even where there are more than two parties, very stratified veins of left and right. What's more, our systems were designed when politics was a "later in life" mission; it is now a career that often starts shortly after university and progresses through a series of political posts until the summit is reached. Checks and balances are there for very good reasons in most constitutional democracies; but in the modern world they often lead not to consensus for change but to sclerosis or minimal change. Above all, over a period of years since the war as the state has grown and public services and welfare systems have developed, there is a vast network of special interests that have every incentive to defend the status quo vigorously, and virtually none to alter it or even adjust it.

Some of these state systems are extraordinarily complex. Reforming them is intellectually, as well as politically, profoundly challenging. To get that right requires great effort and space—political space in which things can be thoroughly explored, iterated and reiterated. The answers matter. They have effects that don't just run into billions of pounds or dollars or euros but affect lives. But without care, even the act of intellectual inquiry is itself demonised.

Politicians—especially when trying to reform complicated systems built up over decades that employ thousands and impact upon millions—require the brains of the best talents. It should be a national enterprise driven by a shared sense of purpose. Creating the means of achieving this is near to impossible the way we do politics right now. Outsiders come in usually from a genuine sense of

patriotic endeavour. Their motives are rubbished, their backgrounds scrutinised to the point of obloquy and pretty soon they wonder why on earth they ever got mixed up in it all.

The gene pool going into politics is now frighteningly limited. This is not because there is a reduced desire for public service. It is that too many smart people no longer see it as public service—they're wrong in that, by the way, but that's how a lot of people who otherwise might well be tempted, resist the temptation.

The way modern parliaments work has also changed. I don't mean in terms of procedures and so on—they are all too familiar—but in terms of how they function in practical ways. Very few listen to parliamentary debates any more. Press releases matter more than considered speeches. Getting re-elected, fund-raising, building networks of supporters, can be almost a full-time occupation today. In other words, the time for the real job—which, just to recall, is participating as an elected national political leader in national debates—comes a poor second to the business of staying there.

The way our democracies work in the early twenty-first century is virtually a conspiracy against rational decision-making. In times when the political system needs to roll along because we're doing fine and, frankly, the less done the better—and there are such times—these flaws of modern democratic politics do not matter so much. Today they do.

Now, in saying all this, I've not gone soft. I spent twenty-five years in politics. I know the game; it's competitive and occasionally brutal. It's always been like that. But here's the difference today: these are times in which we need to effect radical change. In this regard Europe and America face the same challenges. In Europe it is absolutely plain that the crisis in the eurozone has merely exposed, not originated, the need for reform. The truth is that welfare and public service systems over the years have grown up to become wholly different from the original conception. To have debates over whether to raise the retirement age by one or two years with generous pension provisions is next to absurd. Life expectancy has dramatically altered, while the birth rate is lower. You simply can't, therefore, have smaller numbers of working-age people supporting

larger numbers of the retired. Public services that, when first created, were basic services, which were a momentous advance for a generation that had nothing, are never going to satisfy a generation that in the rest of its life has a vast array of choices, preferences, individualised service and custom, and will expect and demand the same from state services for which they pay their taxes.

I follow the debate about the U.S. deficit with a degree of bewilderment, as befits the foreigner. Some say: isn't it a trifle weird to have such a fierce debate about \$30 billion vs. \$60 billion vs. \$100 billion of cuts to discretionary spending, when the issue is a trillion-dollar budget deficit?

This concern has increased with the ratings agencies now suggesting that the AAA rating of U.S. debt is at risk of downgrade. The European Stability Framework has now been announced, reannounced and again reannounced. On each occasion, the time lag between initial relief and then later disappointment is getting shorter. That is because people know—and in this case, at least, the markets are not behaving irrationally—that the social and economic systems in Europe need fundamental reform and the euro needs an alignment of fiscal and monetary policy.

So I believe there is a systemic political challenge that is about how we mature and modernise our democracies to include not just the form of democracy—voting for the governments—but the substance underpinning it. In a world that is transforming, we cannot govern ourselves with transactional politics, otherwise we will find our Western leadership position not merely assailed—as in a sense it is bound to be—but corroded to the point where the twenty-first century happens on someone else's terms.

This is where we need to rise above partisan politics—which is not as quixotic as it may sound. Look at certain currents in politics right now and you can see a genuine new politics straining at the leash: New Labour, the new Democrats of President Clinton's time and the movement that brought President Obama to power, all consciously reached out beyond their traditional base; there is the coalition government in the UK, and perhaps more interesting the involvement of former Labour ministers in making long-term

government policy; President Sarkozy's inclusion of Socialist Party members in his government; the bipartisan efforts of Simpson—Bowles and the six senators on the U.S. deficit. Where political leaders deliberately go outside their own political base, they almost always win public approval. The very fact of overtly embracing bipartisanship would itself create confidence economically as well as politically. It would give people the sense that politics was rising to the challenge.

This is not about enforced coalition through electoral arithmetic. It has, of course, to be a genuine coalition of ideas and open-minded people. The problem with the coalition government in the UK, is the coalition. It is, when you really analyse it, a coalition of people and party organisations born of necessity, not a coalescence of ideas. The most imaginative policy from non-Tory sources has not come from the Liberal Democrats, but from the former Labour (usually New Labour) ministers I mentioned above.

I am talking about an approach that avows a different way of doing politics by preference. Take the debate over the role of government. There is a perfectly sensible case for reshaping and reinventing government today to make it more effective; to take it out of areas of delivery and execution better done by others; to reduce its cost; to make it an agent of strategic change rather than the type of heavy hierarchical structure of the “one size fits all” state of the past. There are a thousand efficiencies anyone used to dealing with private sector reorganisation could make in any government department or service you care to mention.

Putting this argument in terms of some piece of zealotry that assumes the very notion of government is at best a necessary evil, distracts from the core reason for reform: making government work better for people. This then motivates those on the other side of the spectrum to launch their own ideological “crusade” to prevent any such change happening. So parts of the right end up arguing that the state as a concept is wrong; and on parts of the left that even if it's not working effectively, the state has to be defended. The casualty is common sense.

Now, personally, I see changing this politics as very much consistent with the finest traditions of progressive politics. I am still, as the book shows, an ardent advocate of third-way politics. I believe in community, in a society that shares purpose and values and is cohesive, rather than simply a collection of individuals and families striving and struggling on their own. A belief in social justice brought me into politics, and it is still what motivates me. In terms of ends, objectives and values, progressive politics should be well placed to lead this new approach to modern democracy, precisely because its roots are in popular movements of change and progress.

However, I am a third-way progressive because I have always thought that these ideals have been diminished by a refusal to distinguish between values as principles and values applied in the practical world. Values as principles are timeless. Their practical application is very much time-bound; and therefore as times change, so should policy. Instead, progressives have often clung to particular concepts of the state, government, and collective institutions like trade unions whose radical reform has been long since demanded by changing times. Failure to appreciate this is why voters in Europe are preferring conservative governments to make the changes, even though they often distrust their values. Face people with a choice between traditional left and traditional right and there is a traditional outcome: the left loses.

I am impatient with much of progressive politics when it fails to see that values are dynamic; that they guide you as to the why and the where, but not as to the how. How you do it is today's challenge, and that depends on the way the world is now, which is different from how it used to be in a multitude of ways. If we were to apply this approach to the key challenges facing us, what would the correct policies be? I would identify five such challenges:

Reform of Government

Reform of the Economy

Foreign Policy and the Transatlantic Alliance

The Middle East and North Africa

Energy

Reform of Government

This is in two parts: altering the way government works internally; and changing its services, some of which, of course, are delivered at a state or regional level. As for government itself, it should be smaller, more strategic and more focused on policy. I found in office there was a real dearth not of conventional policy advice—we excelled in that—but of new thinking, radical policy ideas. Take the way a large company works today and compare it to a government department. In the company there would be a continuous reassessment, from first principles, of what the company is trying to do and how it is doing it. In particular there would be a relentless focus on system improvement through use of technology; perpetual analysis of the customer base and how its habits and wishes were changing; and a comparative study of what the competition is up to.

Government doesn't much function like that. For example, there is very little work by government—as opposed to think tank—on how other governments have created change, on what the empirical evidence is for certain policies. In Downing Street, I formed a Delivery Unit, Policy Unit and Strategy Unit, staffed largely by outsiders and charged specifically with trying to learn the lessons of change: how others had tried to effect it; to think new thoughts about systemic change; and to distinguish between day-to-day policy management and radical long-term policy. In departments, such an infrastructure was largely absent, yet there were hordes of people dedicated to monitoring and managing and issuing guidelines. Where there were research capabilities, they worked in very conventional ways and rarely did they come up with practical methods of delivering effective results as opposed to sociological essays that had limited value.

What should happen, therefore, is an attempt to create a genuine consensus around long-term reform of the way government works in order, radically, to realign government with the modern world.

In public services and welfare, the changes are much harder to make, since they touch not just entrenched interests but people's lives. Change will therefore necessarily only happen over time. But, again, round the world certain lessons are obvious. Any welfare system that encourages people to be welfare recipients is constructed contrary to purpose. It is better to spend money on equipping people to retrain and find work, than on benefits. The retirement age has to be raised in line with the age to which people are living. Over time, we have to rebalance what the general taxpayer, through the state, contributes to pension provision and how people provide for themselves; and the regulation of the latter has to be sensible and not so burdensome that the costs make it prohibitive for middle-class people.

In social exclusion and help targeted at those at the very bottom of society, we have to be prepared to intervene radically and early. One of the greatest mistakes of social policy is to treat "the poor" or "the disadvantaged" as one homogeneous grouping. They are not. There is all the difference in the world between a family that is poor but functioning as a family, where the child and the parents with the right education and opportunities (to which I shall come) can succeed; and the family that is dysfunctional, where the parent/s has/have drug, alcohol or behavioural problems. No amount of opportunity will offer them a way out until the dysfunction is tackled head-on. Even in the worst neighbourhoods, my experience was that the majority were law-abiding and decent. They were, however, regularly overwhelmed by a small number of totally dysfunctional families operating outside of society's mainstream. They are a special case. They need treating as one. Conventional social work or social policy is utterly hopeless in dealing with them. We can spend billions as a result with little progress.

So, towards the end of my time in government, we began to utilise methods for dealing with severely dysfunctional families that meant a considerable degree of contact and intervention at an early stage. Again, conventional policy will tell you little can be done, except by way of traditional social work, until a crime is committed or abuse is discovered, for example. Yet we know very early which

families are at risk. It is very early that intervention is necessary. Or take the inefficiency of adoption laws where there is a long, drawn-out process, full of rules and restrictions, not all of which make sense, while we leave children in the care of parents who will not look after them. The point is we have to conduct the policy inquiry from first principles, not within a system that is itself at fault.

Which brings me to an obsession I had before government and during my time as prime minister: law and order. I remain militant on the subject. This is far more than the usual debate about whether prison “works”—of course it does at one level, since it gets the offenders off the streets—but at another, as rehabilitation figures show, it isn’t the answer. I introduced a series of measures as prime minister on organised crime, seizure of assets and antisocial behaviour. All of them altered the normal rules of the criminal justice system, but we needed to go much further. I still think we fail completely to understand the link between crime, especially organised crime, social deprivation and opportunity. Give people a law-abiding environment and a good education, and a large part of the benefit system would become irrelevant.

Again, the point is that the criminal justice and welfare systems have grown up unchanged in a world light years away from the social setting in which they were originally conceived. The question is therefore less a right vs. left one. It is rather: given how society has changed, how do we reorder the systems so that they accomplish their original goals of creating law-abiding communities and providing opportunity to those without it?

Health care would need its own book. Having studied different systems and different attempts to reform them, I have to say one thing at the outset: no system provides the answer and all systems are under strain. However, I would say two things stand out.

First, the benefit of a universal, taxpayer-funded system is access; the benefit of a privately funded system is quality of service and adaptability to the patient’s wishes. The question is: can you devise a system that combines the two? In any universal system, the key to change is to introduce centres of competition, to give patient choice and to have measures of accountability that are transparent, with

information freely available. Whatever process of commissioning is used, it will only work effectively if patients have power and providers are diverse. This is the only way also to encourage the system to self-reform, which is vital in circumstances where medical technology is routinely changing the nature and extent of treatment and care and also changing the best place to get care which, increasingly, will be in a primary health-care setting. Indeed, I would say the same of mainly privately funded systems: the more competition the better. You need to deal with soaring legal costs. And where, for reasons of access and equity, the state subsidises the health care of the needy, try in so far as is possible not to push their health care into a different system. Rather, help them to be part of the private system everyone else uses.

The other point is to recognise that no country can afford its health-care system without the active participation of its citizens. People know more today, learn about their conditions, self-diagnose, can manage their own conditions and want to do so. We all need to look after ourselves better: eat well, exercise, drink responsibly, don't smoke. There has to be a huge move towards prevention, which needs to become part of how we live. In the book I examine these policy issues in detail by reference to my own travails as prime minister, so necessarily here I am just making general health policy points; but the one large point is: the right answer does not begin with conventional left/right politics, whether in regard to health care or anything else.

Actually, it often starts in school.

Reform of the Economy

Which is also where a sensible long-term economic policy begins. But before that, let me turn to a more immediate economic discussion. I develop this in detail in the last chapter. In summary, the danger, as I see it, is as follows.

The financial crisis is bound to change economic policy. The danger is it regresses it. At the moment, Western policymakers are in this bind. The deficit is bad because it saps confidence in the

economy, but cutting the deficit too fast may risk cutting growth, thereby making the deficit worse (since, as government swiftly educates you, the biggest swings in the surplus or deficit of government spending come from levels of growth). Higher interest rates also limit growth since they raise the cost of borrowing, yet rates that are too low may cause inflation. So the macro picture is confused. The key starting point here, though, is to make these judgements those of right vs. wrong, not right vs. left. Debating whether Keynesian economics should be revived or not is simply distracting. It is clear that we need credible plans for deficit reduction. It is obvious these will only happen over time. Given the propensity of government to spend, a judgement can be made and adjusted over the course of the plan, as can the management of interest rates.

The decisions that will contribute hugely to the success of the macro strategy, however, will be on the micro side, i.e. on tax, spending, regulation, the general business environment, and, above all, jobs. Here the policymakers are in a different sort of bind. The conventional wisdom, at least, of today's politics is that the people are anti-bankers, big business, everyone who "got us into this mess". There is also a genuine and burgeoning reaction against those who earn "too much", against elites, and to put it more fairly and rationally, against inequality, a lack of social mobility and a fear that this generation may be the first in the modern era whose children don't expect to do better than their parents.

At an emotional level I have a huge sympathy for those arguments; but, as ever, the question for the decision-maker, as opposed to the columnist, is what would make the difference, i.e. what works to change this situation? Here, unfortunately, there is a clash between the correct short-term politics and the correct long-term policy. A sensible policy would be: to be cautious on regulation since we need business, including the financial sector, to be vibrant and confident (though as I say later, we should have major reforms on global supervision and coordination); tax reform to reward work and help create jobs; and use the necessary changes in public services and welfare spending to shape the platform for future

growth. Above all, education—both investment in it and reform of it—would move centre stage; and education not simply at school or university, but pre-school and in adult life.

In other words, we would use the crisis and the reinforced urgency to change as a result of it, in order to make reforms that, if we analyse our economies from first principles, we should be doing anyway. Instead, the overwhelming urge of politicians, for reasons that are completely understandable, will be to address business under the mantra “this must never happen again” (one of the most commonly used, often futile, and occasionally counterproductive slogans in politics); have more regulation; raise taxes on the wealthy; and try to protect the vulnerable by retaining as much of the existing system of support as possible in straitened times, and cutting back on capital investment in the future.

Let me single out two of these items. Both show how hard it is to make such changes; but also why they are so necessary. “Tax reform” is an easy phrase to utter because stated like that it is essentially anodyne; and as I learned in office, everyone is in favour of reform in general, just not in particular. However, the way our tax systems have evolved—with all sorts of tax breaks, loopholes, assorted special reliefs—means that we have tax systems today that we would never design this way were we able to start from scratch. This is not just a matter of logic but of experience. We have learned what is effective and what isn’t. Taxes on jobs reduce jobs. High taxes on income reduce the incentive to work. Indirect taxes on consumption need to be on a rational basis. Complexity employs accountants; it doesn’t produce efficiency or growth.

Most people would agree with this. The problem is that each tax break and each special relief has its own interest group. Taking away any one of them causes a mini political storm that can become a major one; but the consequence of not reforming is that we end up with taxes on business—which create the jobs—and on direct income, which limits incentives and, by the way, invariably means the very wealthy can find ways to dodge, while the comfortably off get hit. That is why the only way of doing it is to take it out of a partisan fight between right and left, construct a platform of shared

national purpose, and make our system competitive in the new global economy.

The other issue is education. I came to power on a programme of “education, education, education” so I know first hand how hard it is to do it. I believe people will look back, in time, at the state of our education system and be truly appalled that a situation had been allowed to develop whereby, in a world where education defines your life chances, a good 40 to 50 per cent of our children, possibly more, had an inadequate start in life. By the end of ten years in office, we had made the first really important reforms to secondary schools in Academy and self-governing Trust schools; to universities through the introduction of tuition fees; and to early years learning through Sure Start and the “No Child Left Behind” programme. But each step was fraught with opposition and obstruction and we still have a long, long way to go. However, from the UK experience, and that of the U.S., Scandinavia and elsewhere, one thing stands out: the bigger the reforms, the better the results.

Of course we need the investment, which is why when we look at spending on benefits and spending on education, the disparity is so crushing. But it is now clear which reforms work. Schools run by bureaucracies don’t; schools with an independent ethos, run by teachers in the interests of parents and pupils, do. Teachers’ unions can’t have a veto over policy. Where schools know parents have a choice, they improve. Discipline, respect, an environment that encourages application and hard work: these are the obvious things we want for our own children. As I always used to say when beginning an education policy debate in Downing Street: let’s start as parents, not policymakers.

The lessons of reform from around the world are now definable. (I set many of them out in later parts of this book.) So we should do them.

The reason for urgency in all this is how the rest of the world will develop. This is something I see so much more clearly now since leaving office. It is fascinating to see those countries at an earlier stage of development. They begin to shape their rudimentary systems of education, health and welfare. I always say to them:

learn from what we got wrong; don't assume we would do it this way if we had our time again. By and large that is how they're approaching it. As they grow, they will provide markets for us. They will also be our competitors. But one thing is for sure: we will have to be better, smarter, move up the value chain just to stay afloat, never mind ahead. That is why education is so crucial. Take manufacturing. Those who say we need modern manufacturing, that we need to make things as well as having service companies, are right; and the way to do it is through a focus on education, technology, on higher attainment in engineering, chemistry and science. It is to encourage young people to see a future in manufacturing that is not about assembly lines and blue overalls, but about creativity, ingenuity and innovation. If I had my time over again, I wouldn't be a lawyer, I would go into industry.

The point is that the way the world around us is changing means we just can't afford to stay still. We have to stride out; and our method of politics is holding us back.

Foreign Policy and the Transatlantic Alliance

If we lack confidence about our future at home, we are unlikely to project confidence about our future abroad. If I had any simple message for America and Europe right now, it would be: show strength. I understand completely why it jars to say something that sounds, in a sense, rather primitive and of course can lead to the accusation of arrogance. We have to liberate ourselves from the posture of apology. To be strong is not the same as being arrogant. Being humble is not the same as being passive.

Both America and Europe have got a certain psychological challenge right now. For the U.S. it is partly a desire to retire in order to reflect upon and deal with what appear to be significant internal issues that preoccupy the country. That is why there was no rush to be involved in Libya. Also, the years after 9/11 have taken their toll on the lives of brave and committed servicemen and women, in emotional wear and tear, and also financially. These have been tough years, made tougher by a feeling that despite

acting for what America perceived to be the best of motives, American action was disputed, even scorned, and America's reputation was said to have suffered. It is dispiriting to fight the good fight and yet be excoriated for fighting it. This is why the action President Obama authorised, which resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden, is so hugely significant. It shows that, no matter how long it takes, those who kill the innocent in deliberate acts of terrorism will eventually face justice. It showed strength. It showed staying power. It was assertively but not arrogantly executed. This could be a turning point.

I go into all the different policy details and conundrums of America's position in the book. I want to debate here the psychology. One thing I learned in politics is that although it would be great if the crises came sequentially, unfortunately they don't. It would be good if we could deal with the financial crisis in an otherwise calm world; and then having dealt with that, turn our attention to foreign affairs as those waters become choppy, but that's not what happens. They come on their own timetable with their own agenda. And at this moment, the world is a very dangerous place.

Secondly, there is a real risk that a perceived conventional wisdom amongst a certain intellectual elite becomes a policy. Here's the surprising thing: much of the world wants America to be strong, and those that don't, want it weak for bad reasons. An assertive America causes people all sorts of problems, makes them uncomfortable, forces them to do things they would rather not, and can even make them fearful; so does an unassertive America. Take that strong hand off the tiller and, sure, the risk of getting seasick as the vessel carves through the water is reduced; but the risk of drift arrives very quickly and is infinitely more alarming. That is why the action against bin Laden was celebrated even in many parts of the Middle East.

The important thing to realise is that this is not just about the assertion of power but of values. At its best, the U.S. doesn't just stand for liberty, but also for justice, for a world in which people are not only free but equal. How the world develops, with new centres

of global power arising and huge challenges of cultural as well as political ideology confronting us, will depend dramatically and fundamentally on how willing America is to stand up for those values.

For Europe, the challenge is strength. This challenge is simple, unadorned, obvious, and desperately insistent. As a result of its economic woes, Europe finds it hard at this moment to act with coherence and strength. Yet the most frustrating thing is not the size of the challenge, but the size of the opportunity. America needs Europe as its partner. The transatlantic alliance is more relevant today, not less. The rise of new powers with different traditions and, more important, different systems of government, means that Europe and America should stand strong together in order to shape the world's development. For that to happen, Europe has to act in unison.

The trouble is that—quite apart from the immediate economic crises—Europe is a collection of proud, independent nations, each with its own views, culture and traditions. So, for example, Germany will approach certain issues very differently from France, however close the ties between the two nations are. What is necessary is to look at Europe in the early twenty-first century in a quite different way from the Europe of the immediate post-war years. Back then, the issue was peace; how to prevent Europe going back to the wars that periodically had defined European history. Since that was the rationale, the cause of European integration was born and it was very straightforward. Europe would be bound together by a set of institutions that over time would acquire more power. The Council would be the place of the leaders of the individual nations, but over time its power would reduce; the Commission would be the powerhouse of integration; the Parliament would be the nascent forum of European democracy. The more integration, the more peace, because the less scope there would be for individual nations to break out and restart old enmities. It is a measure of how fast the world changes today that in the span of less than one lifetime, the very thought of hostility between European nations is now fatuous.

The danger for Europe today is not war; it is weakness. The rationale for Europe is not how to keep the peace between European nations, it is how, together, they project power, influence and strength in a world in which any of them, even the largest, is going to be small in comparison with the new, emergent powers of the East. The purpose of this, of course, is not power or influence per se; it is because the world can be better through Europe having power and influence. Europe has many faults, but it has progressive values, a decent basic adherence to the Judeo-Christian heritage that precisely because of its tumultuous and often terrible history has achieved a considerable measure of humane civilisation today. The world needs Europe to be strong. And for Europe and the U.S. to be together.

Once this new rationale for European unity is understood, it changes profoundly not just the way Europe looks at itself, but the way it needs to work. At present, the debate in Europe is poised precariously between the federalists and the phobes, those who believe in “ever closer integration”; and those who see such a plan as an assault on the nation state. Both positions exclude the majority of European people. People recognise the need for Europe to act coherently but are anxious about a Europe that takes away power from parliaments to which people feel close and gives it to institutions to which they feel little affinity or loyalty.

This polarised debate is the product of the old rationale for Europe. Integration in these terms is seen as institutional integration since the nation state is seen as a symbol of independence that is contrary to the European ideal. It then becomes an objective in itself. The constitutional changes eventually embodied in the Lisbon Treaty were less about what Europe wanted to do, in specific policy terms, than about the mechanisms by which it was governed, and what that symbolised in terms of “European integration”. The result is an obsession about institutional integration in itself rather than a debate about what we want to do as Europe, where the institutions should be at the service of the policy, rather than the policy at the service of institutions.

If the debate becomes one about how to project European power, then a quite different agenda arises. This would mean, in certain areas, more integration but for a defined purpose. Europe needs a common defence policy. Why? To increase its leverage and power so that if the U.S. decides not to act, Europe can; or if the U.S. is acting in concert with Europe, the partnership can be on more equal terms. A common energy policy makes sense to reduce cost, improve efficiency and cut energy consumption. The single market will require greater integration but rightly so, for economic growth and to produce jobs. Hence the importance of the single EU patent recently approved by the mechanism of reinforced co-operation, where some countries can act together and others are allowed to opt out. Fighting organised crime and illegal immigration across borders makes sense, so integrate where necessary to do so—but don't fixate on every aspect of immigration law being identical across all countries. It isn't necessary. Most immediately for the health of the single currency, there will need to be greater integration and co-ordination of fiscal policy. If done in order to improve stability and therefore growth, it will be accepted; but not if it's seen as an end in itself to give Europe more power over individual countries.

Focusing on European power, then, gives a different complexion to the discussion of Europe's institutions. The Council needs to work more effectively with strong leadership. The Commission is allowed to do its job as the engine of effective decision-making. The Parliament can be a forum of revision, debate and initiative. But one thing would be abundantly clear. Ask UK voters to name an MEP and I would be surprised if above 10 per cent could do so. The result in other European countries won't be wildly different except where the MEP was at one time a national figure. So the notion of a steady evolution towards a reduced Council and an enhanced Parliament is based on a fundamental diversion from democratic accountability. It won't work. If pushed it will feed scepticism about Europe, if not outright opposition. It is a twentieth-century agenda.

If, instead, Europe concentrates on projecting power—possibly even eventually with a European president directly elected by European people, but presiding still over an alliance of nation states,

it can do what the citizens and countries of Europe urgently need, namely ensure that Europe's voice, its interests and its values play their proper part in fashioning the new geopolitical era.

A crucial test of both U.S. and EU strength will come over how events in the Middle East are handled.

The Middle East and North Africa

I said earlier that sometimes the hardest thing in politics is just getting the right answer. Leadership in politics is about answers, i.e. you have to come down on one side or another. There's another thing: inaction is also a decision, with consequences. Indecision simply becomes a different, more passive form of decision-making.

People often say to political leaders: listen! Get advice! Seek views! By and large leaders do so. But here is the problem: when you listen, you hear different voices. Advisers disagree. The views cover a range of disparate options. Then you have to decide.

As these uprisings change the face of the Middle East and North Africa—and as I write, this revolution is nowhere near being over—a leader seeking counsel will get two opposing views, both within his country and outside it. The first view is, in effect: stay out; this is their struggle, they have to do it; learn from Iraq and Afghanistan and realise that to interfere is to make things worse. Besides, we have plenty back here to think about. Let's look after ourselves first, for a change.

It's a beguiling argument. What's more, it may be where the people are. I don't notice much appetite in the U.S. or Europe for activism.

The alternative view is that we have major interests engaged in the region. We have no real option but to be active. The question is: what's the right action?

It won't surprise you to know I favour the second argument. Libya is an interesting test case. Suppose we had done nothing. Gaddafi would have retaken the country and suppressed the revolt with extraordinary vehemence. Many would have died. But the more far-reaching consequence is that within a period of months, we would

have supported the removal of a key ally, President Mubarak of Egypt (and you can't rewrite history, he was our ally); and then stood by as Gaddafi (who despite his change on WMD and terrorism could not be considered in the same way) kept power. The damage to the West's reputation, credibility and stature would have been not just massive but potentially irreparable. That's what I mean by saying inaction is also a decision.

But it doesn't stop there. What do we do when Bahrain is in the grip of a Shia/Sunni power struggle? What do we say when Saudi Arabia believes its core interests are threatened and intervenes? Where are we on the removal of the Assad regime in Syria? What do we do if Iran decides to suppress internal dissent and continue to pursue its nuclear weapons ambitions? Do we regard stability in Jordan as a vital interest? And if the peace process between Israel and Palestine is in disarray, do we take the view that the vacuum matters when a short time ago it was in our strategic interest to resolve it? To this list you could add another ten questions, not the least of which is what is happening postrevolution in Egypt particularly, but also in Tunisia.

The point is: we need a Plan. None of these questions is easy to answer. All involve an immensely tricky interplay between interests, values, practical activity and political judgement. Nothing we do will be free from criticism or opposition, our motives in any action will be suspected, and it will be impossible to predict accurately the outcome of any action decided upon. But Europe and America came together over Libya and, though it is difficult and though the way things will turn out is uncertain, it showed leadership; and amongst the criticism, there was also—in the region—relief that leadership was shown. So what is the Plan to guide us through what is happening? I think it consists of the following.

Evolution is better than revolution; but the status quo is not an option. The truth is, it would have been better in Egypt if the regime had laid out a plan for change and steady evolution towards proper democracy some years back. It didn't, and the lesson for all autocratic regimes the world over is: change, or be changed. But where there is the possibility of evolutionary change, we should

encourage and support it. This is the case in the Gulf States. Instability there would be damaging not just to our interests but to those countries and their people. Many are already embarking on a path of steady change. We should help them keep to it and support it. None of this means we do not criticise strongly the use of violence against unarmed civilians. Or that if that violence continues, we do not reserve the right then to move to outright opposition to the status quo, as has happened in Libya. But it is more sensible to do so in circumstances where the regime has excluded a path to evolutionary change. Then it is clear: the people have no choice. But if there is a process that can lead to change with stability, we should back that policy. My point is simple: we need to have an active policy, be players and not spectators sitting in the stands, applauding or condemning as we watch. Like it or not, we have to participate.

In Egypt and Tunisia, we should work closely with the new governments to help them navigate their way to genuine democracy. Only they can decide on their future. It is not for us to try to impose—it wouldn't work anyway—but there is a space between imposing and just watching events unfold. We should be very clear, especially in relation to Egypt: democracy is not just about the right to vote a government in and out. It only works if a whole array of other freedoms come with freedom to vote: the rule of law, properly and impartially administered; freedom of expression; free markets; and freedom of religion. We should stand ready to help with aid, debt relief and the muscle of the international financial institutions, but we should also be quietly insistent that such help won't succeed unless proper rules and order are put in place.

Iran should be put under renewed and intense pressure to back off from both its nuclear ambitions and its deliberate attempts to foment instability and terrorism in the region. I am an unashamed advocate of regime change in Tehran. At the least, they should know that we are strong, determined and resolute on pushing back against their influence; and that an Iranian nuclear bomb is a red

line for us. The sooner we are explicit about this and expose at every turn what they are doing or trying to do, the better.

We need to lay out a strategy for getting us to Palestinian statehood; and an end to the Israel/Palestine dispute. Of course at one level it is even harder now for Israel. What stability and predictability it had in its neighbours has been replaced by instability and unpredictability. For similar reasons, but with an opposite conclusion, the Palestinian leadership find it hard to go into negotiation with an Israeli partner they don't trust, to make difficult compromises which will be tough to sell, in circumstances where they don't know the regional context into which such compromises will be played.

So the Israeli security concerns are even greater than before, and the Palestinian leadership task—to carry their people with them in a unified politics—is even more challenging. Nevertheless, look at it a different way: precisely for reasons of security, now is a sensible time for Israel to make peace, if those concerns can be addressed, while for the Palestinians, and at least for their moderate leadership, now is the moment when they need the prospect of genuine statehood more than ever.

What is necessary therefore is a strategy that a) sets out a framework for peace, guiding the negotiations to a deal that is fair for the Palestinians on territory and realistic for the Israelis on security; and b) creates the momentum on the ground in support of such a strategy by making real changes in the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza.

If there has been any bright spot in the last three years, it has been the state-building programme of Prime Minister Fayyad, under President Abbas' leadership. The militia have been replaced by proper police and security forces; the courts and prisons have begun to function; social programmes have been introduced; the environment for doing business has been transformed; the economy has grown and, for the first time in years, in 2011 the need for outside aid has been substantially cut. Even Gaza has seen a significant opening up, despite continuing attacks. Whatever

happens in respect of relations between Fatah and Hamas, this programme must continue.

What works, therefore, is clear. We just need to do much more of it. I started this part by saying we needed a Plan, with a capital P. Usually I am sceptical about such things. They can end up having grandiose titles and ambitions and very modest impact. In this case, though, I think there is a lot to be said for having something that very clearly denotes that we are taking a “whole region” view; that we are going actively to engage and support evolutionary change; that we will stand up for a platform that delivers greater freedom with stability; that where there have been revolutions, we are ready to assist the new governments if they are moving towards genuine democracy; and that we will not allow those who have a different agenda to gain the upper hand.

In this I also favour being quite specific about our anxieties and concerns. They can be and should be put simply and plainly: that the move to democracy is subverted by Islamist groups whose concept of democracy is alien to what we believe. There is a fear in part of the West that by doing so, we are insensitive. This is an error. Actually many of those within the region want us to be open about this anxiety; because they share it.

What's more, the anxiety is fully justified. The truth is there is another big struggle going on alongside that for democracy and freedom. It is about the nature and the future of Islam in the twenty-first century. The sooner we engage with this openly, the better. It is absolutely at the heart of our future security and stability. It requires a quite different sort of strategy, policy and engagement from that to which we are accustomed. The foundation I began, the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, is no doubt seen as eccentric by those who ask why a former political leader should concern himself with religion. But how different faiths, and therefore different cultures, relate to each other, learn to work and live with each other, will be quite possibly the determinative issue of the twenty-first century. For the reason I gave earlier, this century is unlikely to see a repetition of the clashes of fundamental political ideology which so

marked and scarred the twentieth century, but it could easily be a century shaped by clashes of cultural or religious ideology.

Over four billion people in our world today identify themselves as having religious affiliation. Islam is the world's fastest growing religion, though in China, for example, the fastest growing faith is Christianity. In surveys asking people how important religion is to them, the number saying religion is important or very important is around 30 per cent in the UK, roughly the same in the rest of Europe, over 60 per cent in the U.S., and in virtually every country in the Middle East over 90 per cent.

We still have much work to do in getting proper data for religious attitudes worldwide, and it is a big and complex task, but just think for a moment about the gap between the West and the Middle East. Take Britain. Imagine if the figure here was also over 90 per cent. Leave aside whether that would be good or bad, just think how different a country we would be—a different society, a different culture, with a different way of thinking about and looking at the world.

Now let us assume for the purpose of argument (and this isn't a daft assumption) that there are two essential religious types. The first believe their faith is the only true valid faith; that there is no other path to salvation; and that those who don't share that faith are condemned as unbelievers. This is an exclusivist view of faith. We know that type. Then the second are those who believe strongly in their faith, believe in its claims to exclusive truth, but are, nonetheless, open-minded towards those of other faiths, recognising that different people with different histories have different religious experiences and beliefs, even if they don't analyse it closely; but seeing in the best of what each faith has to offer, some commonality of values and principles that guide good living. We know this type too. Of course, many fit some way along the spectrum towards either end, but each faith has identifiable and clear elements that conform to those two types.

In a society where over 90 per cent of people identify religion as important or very important in their lives, isn't it significant to know which type is in the ascendant and what we might do to

encourage the group that embraces co-existence? Isn't it vital in our society as well as theirs that children are educated at a young age about different faiths so that at least they know what "the other" really believes? Shouldn't we see interaction between faiths not as a nice gesture but as politically, socially and culturally important? Even if we are not in any way religious, religion matters. In the way the predominantly Muslim nations of the Middle East and North Africa develop, it will matter profoundly. This is not even to mention the circumstances of nations like Pakistan, Somalia, Indonesia and the huge Muslim population of India.

We need a Plan that covers all this, from the economic to the cultural, and we need it fast.

Energy

For reasons both of energy security and climate change, I put this challenge up there with those of the global economy and terrorism. There are still many sceptics on climate change. For all I know they may eventually turn out to be right, but if they're wrong and we have missed the chance to act, or (at least) vastly increased the costs of dealing with it by acting late, a future generation will find it hard to forgive us. As I say, I am no scientist and therefore I feel unqualified to debate whether the changes in weather patterns and the predictions of catastrophe if we allow greenhouse gas emissions to rise without mitigating action are accurate or not; but plenty of those who are qualified say that they are. Even as an unqualified observer, my best guess is that they are right. And this is a judgement we cannot afford to get wrong.

However, today, there is a far more immediate reason to act: energy security. As the cost of oil spirals upwards again, dragging behind it coal and other fossil fuels, and the supplies of energy come often from unstable and uncertain parts of the world, I would rank energy security for many countries as important as defence. Moreover, we are still at a point where a large part of the world, not least hundreds of millions of people in China and India, and almost one billion people in Africa, has yet to industrialise.

Currently China consumes around 10 per cent of worldwide demand for oil. If its GDP per head carries on rising—and follows the path of similar increases in living standards in South Korea and Taiwan, say—the world output will need to double, and China's share of demand will rise from 10 per cent to 50 per cent. And this is just China. If, as people in poorer parts of the world will want and press for, we go from a world today where a majority are still on low incomes to, say, five billion living the energy-rich lifestyles we take for granted, we would have to increase energy productivity by five to ten times while dropping carbon emissions per unit of energy by a similar factor.

Of course it is true we still have large reserves of oil and oil sands, shale oil, coal and other carbon fuels, but the cost of extraction can be high and the environmental consequences are challenging. To base our future on the assumption that such fossil fuels will satisfy our demand for energy (leaving aside the environment for a moment) would be a dangerous gamble.

Now here is where the challenge deepens. There is no way that we are going to meet the challenge by telling people not to consume; or by raising, heavily, taxes on energy. This argument won't work in the U.S. or even the UK. It has no chance whatever in the emerging markets. China and India will industrialise, period. They are not going to be told by wealthy nations that have raised living standards, precisely by industrialisation through the burning and consumption of fossil fuels, that in the interests of the global environment, they now have to hold back.

There is only one way to solve this challenge: science and technology. We have to improve radically, not marginally, energy productivity and carbon energy efficiency. These technologies therefore have to be disruptive—i.e. alter the game entirely. Government can help, not by picking winning technologies, but by setting a framework globally and nationally that can incentivise the development of such technologies.

Partly this will be about reordering subsidies away from the current bias in favour of fossil fuel. These industries are subsidised, worldwide, at present to around \$312 billion, as opposed to \$57

billion for renewables. It will also be to put in place a global framework that gives clear direction to the private sector that governments are united in a desire to reduce carbon emissions and move over time to a low-carbon economy. In this regard, there is a huge danger we make the best the enemy of the good in the negotiations for a successor treaty to Kyoto. Kyoto was a treaty whose purpose was to make a point. Its successor is happening in far more serious times, with governments now anxious to make a policy, not a point. But it has to be realistic and practical, otherwise we're asking leaders to pay a political price they just can't. So I would take the commitments already entered into by national governments which cumulatively mean a big shift in policy; not fixate on precise percentages of carbon reduction by precise dates (which is based on data that is actually less precise than many pretend); focus heavily on areas like deforestation and sharing of technology where steps forward are being taken; and get the treaty agreed and under way.

The signal this would send would itself multiply the efforts in the private sector to develop the game-changing technologies of the future. To those who say such technologies may never come, it's worth analysing the impact of disruptive technologies over the last few decades. In almost every case, people made predictions of the market on assumptions that technology turned on their head. For example, in the 1980s, McKinsey were asked by AT&T to project the market size of mobile phones in the year 2000. The prediction was a market of one million in the U.S. In fact by 2000, there were over 100 million U.S. mobile phones, and of course there are many more today. A whole series of innovations from lithium ion batteries to ultra low-power processors changed a great clunking, heavy box into the pocket-sized phone we use today.

We can do the same in energy. We just need to create a structure that incentivises it. This will mean not only developing entirely new technologies, but also improving existing ones. For example, as a result of Fukushima, many countries will hesitate over nuclear power. In my view, it would be a tragic mistake if we allowed what happened there to close down the potential of nuclear power. Of

course, we will have to study the lessons carefully, but we should also be seeing how the technology can be further developed and improved so that risks are minimised and the nuclear waste generated is cut radically. Already there are such technologies in formation. My plea would be not to overreact to what has happened, but to keep the enormous and liberating potential of this technology in being. We will need it.

A number of things stand out from this analysis of issues and challenges. If we compare it with a late twentieth-century analysis, we can see how different it is. Some issues are new—for example the importance of religious and cultural ideology and its link with security. Some are now given hugely accelerated importance—as in energy and its link to the environment. But in a sense this could always be so for every generation.

Notice, however, how little either the agenda or the answers conform to a typical right/left analysis. The values that underpin the solutions are often more identifiably progressive in that they concern the necessity of improving the lives of all citizens not just a few; but the solutions themselves treat individuals as individuals, and recognise that today the freedom not just to elect governments but to choose how to live, is an essential aspiration all people share.

Most challenging of all, though, is the fact that all those solutions require us to change; and to understand that a preparedness to change is an indispensable part of preserving those values and enhancing them in a world so radically different from the world my generation grew up in.

The final message I would convey in this introduction is the possibility, the opportunity, that this change presents to us. I have learned a lot in the different phases of my life. I don't mean policy and decision-making and all of that, which is gone into in detail in the book. I mean about how as a human being you approach life. Whenever I have the chance and the privilege to talk to groups of students even as young as my son Leo is now (eleven), I try to get

them to see that people like me—prime minister for ten years—don't come ready-made or predestined. I explain to them that once, believe it or not, I was like they are. I was the same jumble of failed dreams, thwarted hopes, and disappointed expectations along with the achievements. I used to look at successful people and think: I'm not sure I could ever be like that. I know what it's like to lose self-confidence. I know what it's like to fail, come second, to let people down, to let yourself down. Success is a mixture of natural talent, hard work, judgement and, yes, a bit of luck along the way. Not everyone gets to the top; and even those who do, don't always find fulfilment there.

But one thing I have learned: nothing ever comes to those with a negative mind. Nobody achieves without an energy that is essentially positive. Start each day by counting your blessings. There will be plenty of time to contemplate and experience the sad, the depressing, the tragic. Those are emotions any life will have its fill of. But understand life is a gift. If you approach it with that frame of mind, you can always perceive, no matter how dark the time appears to be, some shaft of light, and move towards it.

It's the same for a country. It is the optimistic spirit that gets it going, makes it achieve and shows it that among all the challenges of change, there are fantastic opportunities, and that though change is hard, it can also be exciting and liberating.

I don't think the West should give up on itself or think the twenty-first century will belong to someone else. We may have to share it, but that too can be exciting. All we need is to recover our self-confidence and the self-belief that, although the challenges will be difficult, we have the ability and application to overcome them.

Tony Blair

May 2011



***What's next on
your reading list?***

**Discover your next
great read!**

**Get personalized book picks and up-to-date news about this
author.**

Sign up now.

The *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *Johnson at 10*

ANTHONY SELDON

WITH JONATHAN MEAKIN

TRUSS AT 10

HOW NOT TO BE PRIME MINISTER



The *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *Johnson at 10*

ANTHONY SELDON

WITH JONATHAN MEAKIN

TRUSS AT 10

HOW NOT TO BE PRIME MINISTER



TRUSS AT 10

Sir Anthony Seldon is an educator, historian, writer and commentator. A former headmaster and vice chancellor, he is author or editor of over fifty books on contemporary history, politics and education, including *Johnson at 10*, *The Impossible Office?*, *May at 10*, *Cameron at 10*, *Brown at 10*, *Blair Unbound* and *The Path of Peace*. He's been co-founder of Action for Happiness and the Institute of Contemporary British History, and is founder of the Museum of the Prime Minister.

Jonathan Meakin was educated at Royal Holloway, University of London and at the University of St Andrews. He is a professional researcher and has worked on many publications including *The Cabinet Office, 1916–2016* and *The Impossible Office?*. He has also worked as a researcher on political and historical topics. He has worked at historical sites in Britain and as a volunteer in the United States.

TRUSS AT 10

HOW NOT TO BE PRIME MINISTER

ANTHONY SELDON

WITH JONATHAN MEAKIN



Atlantic Books
London

First published in hardback in Great Britain in 2024 by Atlantic Books, an imprint of Atlantic Books Ltd.

Copyright © Anthony Seldon, 2024

The moral right of Anthony Seldon to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

No part of this book may be used in any manner in the learning, training or development of generative artificial intelligence technologies (including but not limited to machine learning models and large language models (LLMs)), whether by data scraping, data mining or use in any way to create or form a part of data sets or in any other way.

The illustration credits on pp. 349–50 constitute an extension of this copyright page.

Every effort has been made to trace or contact all copyright-holders. The publishers will be pleased to make good any omissions or rectify any mistakes brought to their attention at the earliest opportunity.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Hardback ISBN: 978 1 80546 213 2

Trade paperback ISBN: 978 1 80546 214 9

E-book ISBN: 978 1 80546 215 6

Printed in Great Britain

Atlantic Books

An imprint of Atlantic Books Ltd

Ormond House

26–27 Boswell Street

London WC1N 3JZ

www.atlantic-books.co.uk

This book is dedicated to my colleagues, pupils, parents and governors at Epsom College, where I was honoured to serve as Head from February 2023 to August 2024.

CONTENTS

Dramatis Personae

Preface

Introduction

- 1 Secure the Power Base
- 2 Have a Clear and Realistic Plan for Government
- 3 Appoint the Best Cabinet/Team
- 4 Command the Big Events
- 5 Be Credible and Highly Regarded Abroad
- 6 Learn How to Be Prime Minister
- 7 Avoid Major Policy Failures
- 8 Maintain a Reputation for Economic Competence
- 9 Avoid U-turns
- 10 Retain the Confidence of the Party

The Verdict: ‘Deep State’ or Deep Incompetence?

Acknowledgements

Notes

Illustration Credits

Index



Boris Johnson and Liz Truss were united on little, in truth, except their hostility to Rishi Sunak and hunger for power

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Liz Truss: Prime Minister (6 September 2022–25 October 2022) Also: MP for South West Norfolk (Conservative, 2010–24), Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Department of Education (2012–14), Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor (2016–17), Chief Secretary to the Treasury (2017–19), International Trade Secretary (2019–21), Foreign Secretary (2021–22)
Hugh O’Leary: Husband of Liz Truss (2000–)

Cabinet

Edward Argar: (attending Cabinet) Chief Secretary to the Treasury (14 October 2022–25 October 2022), Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (6 September 2022–14 October 2022)
Kemi Badenoch: Secretary of State for International Trade (2022)
Jake Berry: Minister without Portfolio (2022), Chairman of the Conservative Party (2022)
Suella Braverman: Home Secretary (6 September 2022–19 October 2022)
Robert Buckland: Secretary of State for Wales (2022)
Simon Clarke: Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2022)
James Cleverly: Foreign Secretary (2022–23)
Thérèse Coffey: Deputy Prime Minister (2022), Health Secretary (2022)
Michelle Donelan: Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2022)
Michael Ellis: (attending Cabinet) Attorney General for England and Wales, and Advocate General for Northern Ireland (2022)
Vicky Ford: (attending Cabinet) Minister of State for Development (2022)
James Heappey: (attending Cabinet) Minister of State for the Armed Forces and Veterans (2020–24)
Chris Heaton-Harris: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (2022)
Jeremy Hunt: Chancellor of the Exchequer (14 October 2022–5 July 2024)
Alister Jack: Secretary of State for Scotland (2019–24)
Ranil Jayawardena: Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2022)
Kwasi Kwarteng: Chancellor of the Exchequer (6 September 2022–14 October 2022)
Kit Malthouse: Secretary of State for Education (2022)
Penny Mordaunt: Leader of the House of Commons, Lord President of the Council (2022–24)
Wendy Morton: (attending Cabinet) Chief Whip to the House of Commons (2022)
Chris Philp: (attending Cabinet) Chief Secretary to the Treasury (6 September 2022–14 October 2022), Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (14 October 2022–25 October 2022)
Jacob Rees-Mogg: Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2022)
Grant Shapps: Home Secretary (19–25 October 2022)

Alok Sharma: President for COP26 (2021–22)
Chloe Smith: Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (2022)
Graham Stuart: (attending Cabinet) Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (2022–24)
Lord True: Leader of the House of Lords (2022–24)
Tom Tugendhat: (attending Cabinet) Minister of State for Security (2022–24)
Ben Wallace: Secretary of State for Defence (2019–23)
Nadhim Zahawi: Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (2022), Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (2022), Minister for Equalities (2022)

Advisers

Asa Bennett: Speechwriter (2022)
John Bew: Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister (2019–24)
David Canzini: Deputy Chief of Staff (October 2022)
Iain Carter: Director of Strategy (2022)
Clare Evans: Director of Operations (2022)
Mark Fullbrook: Chief of Staff (2022)
Jamie Hope: Director of Policy (2022)
Sophie Jarvis: Political Secretary (2022)
Adam Jones: Political Director of Communications (2022)
Sarah Ludlow: Head of Strategic Communications (2022)
Simon McGee: Director of Communications (2022)
Adam Memon: Economic Adviser (2022)
Shabbir Merali: Economic Adviser (2022)
Ruth Porter: Deputy Chief of Staff (2022)
Matthew Sinclair: Chief Economic Adviser (2022)
Jason Stein: Special Adviser (2022)

Members of Parliament

Graham Brady: Chair of the 1922 Committee (2010–24), MP for Altrincham and Sale West (Conservative, 1997–24)
Mark Francois: MP for Rayleigh and Wickford (Conservative 2010–, MP for Rayleigh 2001–), Chair of the ERG (2020–)
Philip Hammond: MP for Runnymede and Weybridge (Conservative, 1997–2019), Foreign Secretary (2014–16), Chancellor of the Exchequer (2016–19)
Sajid Javid: MP for Bromsgrove (Conservative, 2010–24), Home Secretary (2018–19), Chancellor of the Exchequer (2019–20), Health Secretary (2021–22)
John Redwood: MP for Wokingham (Conservative, 1987–24)
Craig Whittaker: MP for Calder Valley (Conservative, 2010–24), Deputy Chief Whip (2022)
Gavin Williamson: MP for South Staffordshire (Conservative, 2010–24, MP for Stone 2024–), Chief Whip (2016–17), Defence Secretary (2017–19), Education Secretary (2019–21)

Officials

Andrew Bailey: Governor of the Bank of England (2020–)

Tim Barrow: National Security Adviser (2022–)

James Bowler: Permanent Secretary to the Treasury (2022)

Simon Case: Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service (2020–)

Nick Catsaras: Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister (2022)

Jon Cunliffe: Deputy Governor for the Bank of England for Financial Stability (2013–23)

Stuart Glassborow: Director to HM Treasury (2022–23)

Richard Hughes: Chair of the Office for Budget Responsibility (2020–)

Catherine (Cat) Little: Acting Permanent Secretary to the Treasury (2022)

Clare Lombardelli: Chief Economic Adviser, Joint Head of the UK Government Economic Service (2018–23)

Antonia Romeo: Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Justice (2021–)

Beth Russell: Acting Permanent Secretary to the Treasury (2022)

Tom Scholar: Permanent Secretary to the Treasury (2016–22)

Edward Young: Private Secretary to the Sovereign (2017–2023)

PREFACE

She came, she saw, she crashed.

In the three centuries of the history of the British Prime Minister, there has never been a premiership like that of Liz Truss. She had promise: the most experienced incomer in thirty-two years, with high intelligence, a clear plan and the right focus diagnosed: growth. Britain has had short-serving Prime Ministers before. But nowhere else in our long history has a Prime Minister arrived in power, so spectacularly mishandled an ambitious agenda, detonated an economic crisis, reversed their policies and fallen from power *in less than fifty days*. It paved the way for the worst Tory general election result in history in July 2024. We shall not see her like again.

‘How could this have happened?’ I asked myself, as did so many others. Wasn’t Britain supposed to be a ‘well-governed nation’? How on earth, I wondered, had the British democratic system, the oldest and most tested in the modern world, thrown up Liz Truss?

And so it was, just ten months after becoming Prime Minister, and nine after leaving it, Liz Truss was standing in front of me and asking, ‘Why are you writing a book on me?’

I was taken back by the forcefulness of the question. I didn’t know exactly how to respond. But she gave me no opportunity.

‘I’m writing my own book, you know.’ She looked at me fiercely.

‘I’m glad,’ I blurted out. And off she strutted.

It was Wednesday, 5 July 2023, at the *Spectator* summer party in Central London and this was the first time I had spoken to Liz Truss.

Since her mesmerizing fall from power some months earlier, I had lost count of the number of people who had asked me, ‘Are you going to be

writing a book about Liz Truss?’ Then the inevitable follow-up: ‘I bet it will be a short one!’ Well, maybe I should, I thought.

Liz and I may not have met before; but we had history.

She was an admirer of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which had been established in the 1950s by my father Arthur Seldon. He always insisted, in contrast to his co-founder Ralph Harris, that the IEA stay above party politics: a think tank, not a pressure or spouting tank. It expounded the virtues of the free market and anti-statist thinking that had become her lodestar. Had my father unwittingly helped forge Liz Truss’s thinking? Almost certainly.

Fifty years before she came to prominence, another ambitious provincial woman had risen up through the Conservative Party, inspired by the same liberal ideals. Margaret Thatcher had few mentors or historical precedents for the kind of leader she wanted to be, and certainly none of her own sex. But Truss saw in her a pioneer from whom she could draw inspiration, who had gone on to change, as she considered herself destined to do, the entire course of British history.

Truss was born in July 1975 in the city of Oxford where I was a student ending my second year. I had spent my first summer holiday in 1974 working in the Centre for Policy Studies, newly minted by Thatcher to champion free-market ideas. How could one leader get things so right, and the other, so catastrophically wrong?

Another link to Truss was far more recent. Her chief of staff, Mark Fullbrook, had contacted me about my work on how to characterize and optimize successful premierships. He told her about an analysis I had produced in 2017, and when in No. 10, showed her special advisers a BBC film of me talking about it. Here, after forty years of writing about Prime Ministers, was my first opportunity actually to shape a premiership. A week before she entered No. 10 in September 2022, I had published an article in the *New Statesman* outlining the ten dangers that had ensnared previous Prime Ministers, and how she might circumvent them.¹

Had I in some small part helped create Liz Truss?

It seemed, given her abject failure in office, that she had succumbed to the very dangers I had outlined. But to my dismay and discomfort, she took almost all of my advice on board, by design or, almost certainly, by accident.

‘Secure the citadel’ by appointing a crack team in Downing Street was advice she followed to an extreme degree by appointing ultra-loyalists. Next up was ‘Find your authentic voice early on’. She did indeed. She was not remotely bashful or faltering about what she wanted to do. ‘Macro then micro’, i.e. stick with the big themes and don’t get distracted, was counsel she honoured to the letter. ‘Control your time and make others do the detail.’ Another tick. In fact, to the consternation of her team, she cancelled endless meetings that she deemed irrelevant. ‘Control your Cabinet tightly.’ She kicked aides out of meetings and gave dire warnings to her ministers about misbehaviour and leaking. ‘Have a big fight with the media early on and win: don’t become ensnared in their agenda’. She banished newspapers from her office, squared up to the media... but then lost the big fight. ‘Play the part of PM with style.’ She did, promptly seeing off Britain’s longest-serving monarch and conducting herself diligently through all the events of mourning. ‘Seize the big moments and command them.’ She didn’t just seize the big moment, she made it totally her own and sprayed it in garish colours: the Mini-Budget, the most controversial for forty years, was hers, not the Chancellor’s. ‘Simplify, and be lean.’ She was spare to the point of wasting away: she had one big theme only, growth, and was lean and mean in its pursuit. Finally, ‘work with your Chancellor and avoid pointless battles’. She did work closely, all love and harmony – until she sacked him.

I realized I would need a different approach to explain prime ministerial failure to encompass ‘outlier’ Prime Ministers like Truss (and Johnson). I sought refuge in the more recent ‘impossible office’ analysis I’d written about in 2021: might that be better at explaining her? Or would Liz Truss defy that approach too?

I decided I would shape the whole chapter structure around the ten fields of this new approach to see if it might explain why her premiership went wrong so quickly and so spectacularly. I would also have to delve far

deeper into history than my earlier analysis, right the way back to Walpole's appointment as first Prime Minister in 1721.

I had to write this book. In part to try to understand what went wrong with Truss's bold project, but also to offer a robust and contemporary guide to students and practitioners on how, and how not, to be Prime Minister.

This book, the eighth in the series on Prime Ministers, was written while I unexpectedly found myself back running a school, Epsom College, after the tragic death of the Head. School came first, second and third. The book is dedicated to all at the school.

Anthony Seldon, July 2024



Truss modelled herself on the iconography of Margaret Thatcher, if not her statecraft. Here in Estonia as Foreign Secretary on 30 November 2021



The Sunak team expected Truss to self-implode on the leadership campaign

INTRODUCTION

The office of Prime Minister is the highest position a non-royal can aspire to in the United Kingdom. Since the office was created in April 1721, some 200 million subjects have fretted their ways through Britain's towns and countryside, but only fifty-eight of them arrived at the door of 10 Downing Street to claim the keys.

1 in 4 Million

Put another way, only 1 in every 4 million Britons over those three centuries rose to be PM, and most of them were drawn from a narrow aristocratic elite. Countless politicians aspired to it and some of the very best fell short.¹ For Liz Truss to have been appointed Prime Minister on 6 September 2022 as the last public duty of Queen Elizabeth II was by any standards remarkable. The significance of it was not lost on the younger Elizabeth. Her achievement was unusual for more than not being male or born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Most Prime Ministers had come to office without a very precise programme to enact. Sufficient for many was the premiership itself, content as they were to govern the country responding to, rather than deliberately trying to shape, events. But Truss saw herself in the mould of one of her heroes, Winston Churchill, 'walking with destiny' to fulfil her own historic mission – to save her country from years of torpor and decline.

Once appointed, the top priority for all Prime Ministers is to remain in office. It's difficult to achieve. Barely any since 1900 have left at a moment entirely of their own choosing. But Truss arrived with advantages her recent peers lacked, including extensive Cabinet experience, a full six weeks to prepare for office with top civil service brains on tap and a seemingly

impregnable position as Conservative leader – we’ll explore that later – on top of her ferociously clear mission. After a run of inconclusive premierships, she believed she was going to buck the trend. She’d arrived and everyone had better watch out.

Her plan was high risk and eminently precise, on paper. In her own words, ‘I wanted to concentrate above all on the economy and generating growth. That was my focus until the general election in two years. I knew I’d never have more political capital than at the start. Then, when I won my own election mandate, I would turn my focus for the following five years onto all the other areas like education that badly needed fixing.’² She abhorred what had happened to the country under Labour’s Tony Blair (1997–2007) and Gordon Brown (2007–10), including granting too much independence to the Bank of England, and the ‘furring up’ of enterprise and institutions.

As a Cabinet minister under David Cameron (2010–16), Theresa May (2016–19) and Boris Johnson (2019–22), she had watched as, one after the other, they crashed and burned, their missions incomplete. Johnson was the leader she had most enjoyed working for, but she was frustrated he didn’t do more to deliver the Brexit dividends. She was not going to make the same mistakes. There would be no pussyfooting, no indecision and no lack of courage: she was going in all guns blazing, like Churchill no less, demanding ‘Action this day’, or Margaret Thatcher, who early on in her premiership abolished exchange controls in her fight for freedom.

The average length in office of the Prime Minister over the 300 years has been four years and nine months, or 1,734 days. Truss had a decent chance of lasting considerably longer than that. Even sceptics assumed that, after the early departures of Cameron, May and Johnson, and with a significant majority, the Conservative Party wouldn’t be so rash as to prematurely unseat a fourth. She may have had few ideological fellow travellers, or MPs who liked her personally, but even her enemies – of which there were many – conceded that she would last at least until the general election at some point in 2024. Given the healthy majority of eighty won by Johnson in December 2019, a Truss victory in 2024, even with a

reduced number, didn't seem impossible against an apparently lacklustre Labour leader in Sir Keir Starmer presiding over a still-divided party. But Truss knew that victory would rest on the economy picking up – hence her push for economic growth.

Yet, just forty-nine days later, she and her project had self destructed.

How Unusual was Truss's Brevity?

We know now that hers was the shortest premiership of any British Prime Minister. While seven other premiers since 1721 served less than a year in post, and a further seven less than two years, none had fallen anything like as quickly. Her brevity in post rapidly became a standing joke across the country – the *Daily Star* memorably comparing it to the shelf life of a lettuce. But how unusual was it?

Dig below the surface, and look abroad, and fleeting leaderships are not necessarily unusual.

Last century, the Conservative Stanley Baldwin (1923–24, 1924–29, 1935–37) and Labour's Ramsay MacDonald (1924, 1929–35) served less than a year in their first periods as Prime Minister, in 1923 and 1924 respectively, before coming back for longer stints. They were aged fifty-five and fifty-seven when they first became PM; Liz Truss was ten years their junior. Unlikely though it may seem, no one can rule out her coming back as Prime Minister at some point in the future, expunging forever the unwanted moniker of 'Britain's shortest-serving Prime Minister'. After all, three of the most significant Conservative premiers of the nineteenth century, Robert Peel (1834–35, 1841–46), Benjamin Disraeli (1868, 1874–80) and Lord Salisbury (1885–86, 1886–92, 1895–1902) all served less than a year in their first spells as Prime Minister, at 120, 279 and 220 days respectively. While Peel was the same age as Truss, Disraeli and Salisbury were considerably older and age was more of a handicap back then.

Besides, one might argue, it's parochial to disparage Truss's forty-nine days as absurdly short. Looking abroad, we find American President William Henry Harrison served for only thirty-one days in the White

House. He suffered from severe ill health and died in April 1841 following crude medical procedures that included bloodletting (the deliberate loss of blood believed to be restorative). President James Garfield served 199 days before dying in September 1881 from the wounds inflicted by an assassin's bullet at Washington's Potomac & Baltimore railway station seventy-nine days earlier. The President was attended by his Secretary of War, Robert Lincoln, reawakening traumatic memories of the assassination in the same city sixteen years before of his father Abraham. Neither Harrison nor Garfield can be held responsible for the brevity of their tenures; in both cases, however, their doctors might have been.

Truss's stay appears positively leisurely compared to Spain's leading politicians. Of the 102 Spanish Prime Ministers since the office was established in 1823, sixty-six were gone within a year. Nine lasted ten days or less, mostly during the revolutions, civil wars and political upheavals of the nineteenth century.

Elsewhere, though, Europe offers little solace to her. Even Italy, notorious in English minds for serial political instability, saw its shortest-serving post-1945 Prime Minister, Fernando Tambroni, lasting a heroic 116 days³ in mid-1960 before his supporters abandoned him. Longevity was often elusive among Commonwealth leaders. Four of Canada's twenty-three Prime Ministers since 1867 served less than a year, albeit none as fleetingly as Truss. While Australia has seen six of its thirty-one Prime Ministers since 1901 survive less than a year, three of them came in purely as caretakers. It is to this country that we must look to find a leader who served shorter than Truss. Arthur Fadden stepped up in August 1941 after the stalwart PM Robert Menzies departed, only to resign after six weeks. He later quipped that he had, rather like the Biblical flood, 'reigned for forty days and forty nights'.⁴ Some consolation for Truss can also be found in the claim that she is not technically Britain's shortest-serving Prime Minister. In 1746 Lord Bath and in 1757 Lord Waldegrave were appointed First Lord, but neither had enough political support, resigning within a few days. Back then, there was more debate about what constituted a Prime Minister. Lord North (1770–82) refused to be called 'Prime Minister', arguing that 'there is no

such thing in the British Constitution’, and it was not until Robert Peel in 1846 that the incumbent referred to themselves as ‘the Prime Minister’. The term remained constitutionally imprecise until it began to be used in official language at the beginning of the last century.⁵ When George I appointed Robert Walpole (1721–42) in April 1721, it was not to the job of ‘Prime Minister’, an office that did not exist, but to ‘First Lord of the Treasury’, the name that still appears on the letterbox of the front door of 10 Downing Street, an address into which Walpole moved only in 1735 in his fifteenth year in office.

Truss’s blushes might also be spared by acknowledging that many Prime Ministers have faltered early in their premierships – yet they survived, if often as much through luck than judgement. Even several of the nine ‘top tier’ or great Prime Ministers wobbled badly with early difficulties. Walpole was just over a quarter of the way through his office in June 1727 when he faced his severest challenge, the death of George I and the succession of his son, George II, at a time when the monarch was still the arbiter of the head of government. Walpole had admittedly already served for six years, but it was only by stealth and by milking his astute friendship with the new Queen that he ingratiated himself with the new King. Walpole went on to serve for another fifteen years.

William Pitt the Younger’s (1783–1801, 1804–06) early travails arguably eclipsed those of Liz Truss because his position was precarious from day one. When George III invited him to become Prime Minister on 19 December 1783, one wag described it as the ‘mince pie administration’ as no one expected it to last beyond Christmas, an analogy deployed by Chair of the 1922 Committee Sir Graham Brady in Truss’s final days. Between January and March 1784, the continuation of his premiership was in doubt with many of the big beasts, not least Charles James Fox, Edmund Burke and ex-Prime Minister Lord North, ranged against him. He was defeated in important votes in January, with his support from Cabinet wavering: ‘for six weeks, now, the country had had a government, with no power to govern’, wrote his biographer William Hague.⁶ But Pitt used all his powers of persuasion, parliamentary chicanery and, crucially, patronage

to strengthen his ministry and lay the groundwork for a general election. Critically, Pitt retained the confidence of the King, and in March 1784, he felt strong enough to announce the election that resulted in his supporters winning some seventy seats.⁷ At last he was secure. Pitt went on to serve another seventeen years as Prime Minister.

Other examples abound, not least Churchill (1940–45, 1951–55), whose position as Prime Minister remained vulnerable after his appointment in May 1940 as the war news darkened and Cabinet discussed whether to continue fighting. Margaret Thatcher's (1979–90) insecure first three years were not finally firmed up till victory in the Falklands War of 1982. Well might Truss rue bowing to advice to U-turn on her economic package, a course her *belle idéale* conspicuously rejected in October 1980. Had she too stood her ground, could she have come through, and like her Conservative predecessors, been in power for many years more?

Alas for her, it did not happen, and she can only cling to her belief that she was betrayed, and that, one day, the great crusade she had started will triumph.

Why Do Prime Ministers Fall?

For the rest of us, we have to make sense of one of the greatest puzzles in prime ministerial history. Why did a PM with a strong parliamentary majority, a credible track record of ministerial experience, and who knew their own mind, fall at such speed? The best place to look for clues is the reasons why other short-serving Prime Ministers fell.

General election defeats are the most frequent cause. Alec Douglas-Home (1963–64) had been at No. 10 for just less than a year when the five-year electoral cycle compelled him to call a general election for 15 October 1964. The Conservatives had previously won convincing victories in 1955 (sixty-seat majority) and 1959 (hundred-seat majority) and looked in a strong position. But Labour had acquired a new dynamism and appeal after Harold Wilson (1964–70, 1974–76) took over as leader in February 1963. The general election eighteen months later proved surprisingly close. Only

on the following afternoon was the result known: a Labour victory with a majority of four. At just 363 days at No. 10, Home became the eighth shortest-serving Prime Minister, albeit within a whisker of serving longer.

At two years and 318 days, Gordon Brown is Britain's twenty-first shortest-serving PM. After the May 2010 election, he tried for four days to stay on as head of a coalition government in partnership with the Liberal Democrats. Ultimately he was unsuccessful. He might have surged up the longevity league table had he not backed off calling an early general election in the autumn of 2007. We will never know what might have happened had Brown held his nerve. No doubt the prospect, if he had lost, of becoming one of Britain's shortest-serving Prime Ministers tipped him towards caution. What we do know is that Liz Truss emphatically ruled out any early general election, and that electoral defeat doesn't explain her demise.

Illness, exacerbated by the strains of office, the elusiveness of rest and the unusually high exposure of the PM to germs have been factors in many departures. William Pitt the Elder saw his premiership increasingly bedevilled by illness, including gout and mental health problems felt by contemporaries to border on insanity. Pitt decided in October 1768, having barely governed at all for a year, that he had had enough, resigning on grounds of ill health, the seventeenth shortest-serving Prime Minister at just two years and seventy-six days.

Liberal Henry Campbell-Bannerman (1905–8) led his party to its greatest victory in the 1906 general election, setting the scene for one of its most reforming administrations. Aged sixty-nine when he became Prime Minister, he suffered the death of his wife that August, and a serious heart attack in November of the following year. In March 1908, a concerned Edward VII visited him at No. 10, making it clear that, under all circumstances, a change of premier should be avoided while the King was on holiday. But when Campbell-Bannerman's health deteriorated further, the King summoned Herbert Asquith to Biarritz in the South of France in early April to invite him to take over as Prime Minister. The bedbound Campbell-Bannerman was allowed to remain in Downing Street, where he

died two weeks later. ‘The doctor going in, and the priest coming out; and as I reflected on the dying Prime Minister, I could only hope that no sound had reached him of the crowd that cheered his successor,’ recorded Asquith’s wife Margot. Serving two years and 122 days, he was the nineteenth shortest-serving Prime Minister.⁸

Truss certainly did not suffer from physical illness, though some close to her have speculated whether she had a nervous breakdown in her final days in No. 10. This might have impaired her judgement and precipitated her departure, a thesis we examine in this book. We also examine the thesis that her impetuosity was fuelled by excessive caffeine, or even a regular glass of Sauvignon Blanc, her favourite tippie.⁹

What other factors are behind brief premierships? Death in office was responsible for the departures of several including twelfth shortest-serving Prime Minister, the Marquess of Rockingham (1765–66, 1782) in 1782 after a second administration lasting ninety-six days (for a grand total of one year and 113 days), and the thirteenth briefest, the Earl of Wilmington (1742–43) after one year and 119 days. None of the short-servers was more intriguing a character, though, than the man who for nearly 200 years wore the unwanted mantle of Britain’s shortest-serving PM, George Canning, who survived just 119 days. One of the great might-have-beens, Canning towered over many of his prime ministerial peers in terms of ability and imagination. A formidable Foreign Secretary during and after the Napoleonic Wars, he was already ailing when George IV invited him in April 1827 to become Prime Minister in succession to Lord Liverpool. With politics riven by the issues of parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, and with deep divisions among Britain’s governing elite, Canning might have struggled. But fate intervened, and on 8 August, he died of tuberculosis at Chiswick House in West London, where his great Whig political adversary Charles James Fox had died twenty years before.

The Prime Ministers’ lives have been constantly in danger throughout history, with Truss under enhanced police protection from the moment it became evident that she was the front runner to succeed Johnson in August 2022. Any number of individuals or groups might want to assassinate the

Prime Minister, fired by personal grudges, mental instability or terrorist ideals. The wonder is that only one assassin succeeded in Britain compared to four in the United States, when Spencer Perceval (1809–12) was fatally shot in the lobby of the House of Commons.

So general election defeats, illnesses, sudden death or assassination cannot explain the departure of Truss. But two final explanations for truncated premierships take us closer to an answer. First, some Prime Ministers have had personalities simply unsuited to the demands of the job. Viscount Goderich was one, third shortest-serving Prime Minister at just 144 days. As Frederick John Robinson, he'd been a reasonably successful Cabinet minister, and latterly Chancellor in the 1820s. But in the top job, he proved indecisive, thin-skinned, self-pitying and incapable of generating respect. George IV soon tired of him, supposedly describing him as 'a damned, snivelling, blubbering, blockhead'. Goderich resigned finally in January 1828, and remains the only Prime Minister in history never to have been in office while Parliament was sitting, which then recessed between the summer and mid-January.

Was Liz Truss's personality fatally ill-suited to being Prime Minister? Was she incapable of learning how to do the job? We shall probe in the chapters that follow whether she was wanting in either character or aptitude (or both).

Finally, there are the Prime Ministers who fall through abject failure of their central policy. Neville Chamberlain, a high-quality and proven administrator and politician, had long waited to take the reins from Stanley Baldwin, when he did so in May 1937. He anticipated a long stay, expecting to win the general election due in 1940 and to spend the following years executing his plans for economic and social reform. He and his wife intended to modernize the living accommodation in No. 10 too and make Chequers, the country home in Buckinghamshire the Prime Minister has used since 1921, into a more welcoming residence for visitors. But Chamberlain fatally misread Hitler, believing that he could coax him into being reasonable. When Hitler's actions from late 1938 onwards showed

him to be anything but, the ground fell away from under Chamberlain's feet.

Anthony Eden similarly had progressive plans, and had to wait a long time to step up to the top. He had been Churchill's anointed successor since the Second World War but the old leader only finally retired in April 1955. Eden went on, unlike Truss, to win his own mandate in the 1955 general election. But Eden became obsessed with Gamal Abdel Nasser, the President of Egypt, after his nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956.

In October 1956, Eden chose military intervention, and sent British forces to seize the canal and destroy Nasser. High among Eden's follies was his deliberate decision to conceal from President Eisenhower and the Americans his secret British, French and Israeli plan to regain the canal. When the troops landed in November, the attack was roundly condemned in the UN General Assembly, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev threatened to send soldiers to defend Egypt, and President Eisenhower put pressure on the International Monetary Fund to deny Britain support. In the face of such a uniformly hostile response, Eden promptly declared the military operation over. The U-turn alienated political allies who had told Eden to tough it out. Churchill remarked cuttingly, 'I would never have dared; and if I had dared, I would certainly never have dared stop.'¹⁰

One can only wonder how far Eden's illness and medication were responsible for his wild and capricious decision-making. As he told Cabinet on 9 January 1957, 'It is now nearly four years since I had a series of bad abdominal operations which left me with a largely artificial inside... During these last five months... I have been obliged to increase the drugs considerably and also increase the stimulants necessary to counteract the drugs'.¹¹ Former Foreign Secretary and medical doctor Lord Owen speculates that he was taking mind-altering drugs daily during the crisis, including barbiturates, amphetamines and a drug called Drinamyl.¹² The stated reason for Eden's resignation after one year and 279 days, the fourteenth shortest period, was his ill health. But it was the collapse of his central policy that made his continuation in office impossible.

How far was Liz Truss's collapse due to the failure of her central economic policy, and the subsequent U-turn in the face of international financial pressure? Was there indeed an establishment plot to bring her down? In 1924, many Labour supporters believed that the establishment had publicized a clearly fake document purporting to be from Grigory Zinoviev, head of the Communist International in Moscow, to British communists urging them to engage in subversive activities that would be helped by a Labour government. Publication of this alleged letter in the *Daily Mail* four days before the general election of 1924 was for many years believed to have played a significant part in Labour losing that election, meaning that its first Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, was in office for less than a year (a mere 288 days). An independent report conducted by the Foreign Office in 1999 found that any attempt by the establishment, including the intelligence services, to bring down the Labour government was 'unsubstantiated' by the documentation, and 'inherently unlikely'.¹³

Truss and some of her more ardent supporters believe that a similar establishment, or 'deep state', plot was responsible for bringing her down. She told the American Conservative Political Action Conference in 2024 that they had to 'understand how deep the vested interests of the establishment are' and 'how hard they will fight and how unfairly they will fight in order to get their way'.¹⁴ She herself blamed Sir Tom Scholar, the permanent secretary at the Treasury, whom she and Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng sacked on their first day in power, for encouraging the International Monetary Fund in its damning assessment of the Mini-Budget, resulting in a rush to dump UK government bonds, and the collapse in confidence of the markets. The finger of blame is pointed also at the Treasury and the Bank of England, not least for failing to alert her to the behaviour of pension funds. The Office for Budget Responsibility is also accused of undermining the economic policies. As she wrote in her book *Ten Years to Save the West*, 'the Treasury establishment and the Bank of England were not on my side'.¹⁵ Was this the 'woke' establishment getting revenge against Truss and her right-wing ilk for bringing about Brexit? It is

not just those in the political arena who believe there is truth in the accusation: journalist Robert Peston produced a podcast series in early 2024 in which he argued that the Bank of England and the Treasury were in part responsible for her fall.¹⁶ Others see the sinister hand of the supporters of Rishi Sunak, including Michael Gove, Dominic Cummings and a shadowy Tory adviser Dougie Smith, who has been linked to other plots, all intriguing against Truss from day one. Some believe that hostile Conservative MPs alerted their friends in the City of London to sell bonds to undermine the Mini-Budget. We assess whether there is reason for this belief.

Such claims are far from fanciful. When Thatcher became Prime Minister in May 1979, she too was deeply suspicious of the establishment, believing it to be against her breed of free-market economics and wish to slim down the state. Thatcher provides a constant counterpoint to Truss throughout the book. The two Prime Ministers had similarities that were not superficial: both women, from lower middle-class provincial backgrounds, passionate believers in private enterprise and British patriotism. It was a comparison Truss went out of her way to encourage – with photographs and costumes styled on those of the Iron Lady. But one went on to become one of the most formidable Prime Ministers in British history; the other, the opposite. How did that happen? Each of the ten chapters that follow focuses on one of the possible explanations for Truss's failure, recognizing that, as with any catastrophe, the explanation will be multi-causal. At the end of the book, we reach a conclusion about the most telling reasons why she fell, and whether her bold plan for Britain might ever have succeeded.

Writing *Truss at 10*

A historian is only as good as their sources. Aside from two detailed tomes that cover the premiership, and Liz Truss's own volume, other books covering her time at No. 10 have yet to appear. This means that I have had to rely on primary sources, a mixture of in-person interviews providing some 80 per cent of the book's content, a further 15 per cent from

contemporary documents including WhatsApp messages, and 5 per cent from contemporary commentary in the media.

Almost all senior Cabinet ministers, Downing Street aides and key figures from across Whitehall and beyond were interviewed for the book, some up to seven times. Verbatim records were made of all the 120 interviews (normally I conduct many more, but this was a short premiership). Many of the interviewees provided supplementary documentary evidence. To try to make the book feel as lifelike as possible – premierships happen in speech far more than in written documents – I have included numerous conversations constructed either from contemporary records or remembered by those present in the room. As always with contemporary history, so much of primary importance is never written down – the conversations, moods, messages and memories that will decreasingly find their way into the archives. All on-the-record quotations have been checked with those who provided them, and the book has been read over in multiple drafts by many researchers and insiders, as with other books in this Prime Minister series, to check for accuracy and completeness.

This book was always going to be about more than just one Prime Minister. It is also a meditation on power, and on the office of Prime Minister, and how and why incumbents, specifically this one, fail to understand either of them. It is also a practical manual on how *not* to be Prime Minister.



*Rule Number One: Come to office with loyal MPs and a secure majority.
With Hugh on 5 September hearing that she has been elected by a majority
of members in the country (though Sunak had won more MPs' support in
the first round)*

1

SECURE THE POWER BASE

7 July–5 September 2022

The response to her was tepid. We all noticed; it didn't feel right.'

So said a Conservative MP recollecting the atmosphere among fellow MPs the first time that Liz Truss addressed them as Prime Minister. It was Tuesday 6 September 2022. Her premiership was just hours old and the omens were not good.

'When David Cameron came to speak to us after making the deal to form the Coalition government in 2010, the MPs cheered ecstatically,' recalled another MP. 'They did so again when Boris Johnson first appeared before us after winning the December 2019 general election. Even when Theresa May first met us after seeing our majority wiped out in the 2017 general election, there was far more enthusiasm than there was for Liz Truss. She must've felt it.'

Not since 1945 had an incoming Conservative leader been greeted with such little excitement by their MPs. Indeed, it is doubtful if any new Conservative PM since 1832 had ever had such a sceptical reception. What had happened?

'Many Conservative MPs never accepted the result of the leadership election,' explained the MP. 'They refused to accept that Rishi Sunak had lost. The campaign to unseat Truss started the very day her election was announced.'

Not all expected Liz Truss to emerge as the successor to Boris Johnson as Prime Minister. Not even she herself. Many Tory MPs and a majority of party members in the country never wanted him to go. Yet, in the two months between Johnson announcing his resignation on 7 July, and the announcement of her victory in the leadership competition on 5 September,

Truss prevailed. In the process, her premiership was holed below the waterline before it even left the harbour.

Deciding to Run: 7–12 July

‘Come back immediately. The atmosphere is worse even than when we last spoke. The mood in the Conservative Party is beyond recovery.’ Cabinet minister and Truss loyalist Simon Clarke texted these words to her at 8 a.m. on Thursday 7 July, just hours before Johnson announced his resignation. Most inconveniently, Truss was 7,000 miles away in Indonesia for a G20 meeting in her capacity as Foreign Secretary. In the intense tropical heat, she was in a cold funk. The story began thirty-six hours earlier. Health Secretary Sajid Javid and Chancellor Rishi Sunak had resigned within minutes of each other on Tuesday 5 July, sparking speculation that Johnson would be gone within days. Should Truss leave London at all for her imminent trip while her leadership rivals were making hay? But she was mindful of the damage it could do to her cause if she was seen to be abandoning her duty while Johnson was still trying to resurrect his premiership. So she left – as planned – with a small team on the government’s sleek Airbus A321, putting in a stopover at Dubai to refuel. She spoke to Nick Catsaras, her Foreign Office principal private secretary, when the plane touched down in the Gulf, still in two minds about whether to continue further east. Conscious of the positive publicity of her high-profile summit in Bali with Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov, given her strong stance on the war in Ukraine, she was torn between duty and the possibility of the premiership.

Tim Barrow, the Foreign Office political director accompanying her on the trip, counselled pressing on too, as did her husband, Hugh O’Leary. ‘She always listened carefully and respected [Hugh’s] advice,’ said an aide. But her close trio of young special advisers, Adam Jones, Jamie Hope and Sophie Jarvis, thought differently after reading the runes in London. For years, these three had loyally served Truss, and it was partly due to their hard work that she was even in contention in the first place. Fraught

conversations followed with her team and supporters. She was also talking to her closest ministerial ally, Work and Pensions Secretary Thérèse Coffey, and to her potential rival, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who said she should stay. ‘She was very careful not to say she was standing, but that she was merely “checking in” with friendly MPs to see how they were feeling,’ said aide Sarah Ludlow, accompanying her on the trip.

The exhausted party arrived in Bali in the early hours of Thursday morning where Truss held meetings with the foreign ministers of Indonesia and Australia. All the time, news was coming in from London, where Johnson’s premiership was visibly disintegrating by the hour. Truss was tortured by her predicament. Part of her had wanted Johnson to remain. She saw him as a pretty useless Prime Minister, above all in not pushing for the Brexit dividends, but in her heart she didn’t feel nearly ready to be PM. ‘Are you sure I’m really good enough?’ she said to one aide, looking for reassurance rather than an honest opinion. The other part of her was absolutely desperate for him to go, while playing it cool on the surface: ‘I’ll go for it only when Boris actually resigns,’ she stressed by phone to the trio back in London. But the news that he was leaving tipped the balance. ‘Liz, wake the f**k up and get back here,’ said Adam Jones, the senior of the three. She needed no encouragement, and barked out brusque instructions for her ministerial plane to ‘refuel for London’.¹ She had only been on the ground in Bali for a few hours.

She would need a campaign manager if she was to prevail. In a strong field she was far from being the front runner. Her first call was to the man who had been the presiding maestro over Johnson’s 2019 general election victory, now working for the Conservative Party. ‘I want you to manage my campaign,’ she said to Isaac Levido before the plane left the tarmac in Indonesia. ‘I’m sorry. I can’t do it for you. My contract with the Conservative Party wouldn’t allow me,’ he told her. To some of her aides this was an ominous sign that the very best didn’t want to be associated with her. So she went for Ruth Porter, who had first worked for her as a special adviser in August 2014. Her aides pushed back, wondering whether Porter’s experience was suitable. But Truss was adamant. She rated her very

highly for her loyalty and capability. Porter promptly left the private sector to head up the campaign.

The plane touched down late on Friday 8 July and she was driven back to her home in Greenwich. Her leadership campaign was nonexistent: no money, website, publicity material, office base or lists of potential supporters. This was ground zero. Her nascent team worked at Truss's kitchen table. The star recruit was Jason Stein, a brilliant and mercurial communications aide who had worked on-and-off with Truss since 2017 and who had resigned as Prince Andrew's PR guru shortly before the infamous *Newsnight* interview with Emily Maitlis in 2019. A video announcing Truss's candidacy was filmed in her garden once it had been cleared of weeds and building debris.²

Where was her natural supporter base? Bridges had been burnt with the Remain wing after she emphatically renounced her vote in the EU referendum in her quest to become Brexit Queen. So she reached out for support to right-wing politicians and ardent Brexiteers Iain Duncan Smith, Bill Cash and John Redwood, as well as to financier and Brexiteer Jon Moynihan. 'If you're going to run, I'll help you with the right ideological position,' he told her. He became her campaign's energetic Treasurer and, when she needed money, her fundraiser. Well-liked Thérèse Coffey, Truss's oldest political friend, was tasked to corral MPs. Below them and Stein, Hope specialized on policy, Jones on communications and Jarvis on wooing supporters, at which she was adept. Truss once remarked to her that 'MPs like you. They don't like me. That's why I need you.'³ Reuben Solomon, formerly of Conservative Campaign Headquarters (CCHQ), worked on digital communications, and Sarah Ludlow completed the band, having joined several months before from PR company Portland Communications. Within days, Truss had a team.

On Monday 11 July, she announced her platform: promoting growth and cutting taxes. From the outset she committed herself to reversing the rise in National Insurance that Sunak had announced as Chancellor in March 2022 and scrapping plans to increase corporation tax.⁴ She had her policies. She even had a slogan: 'Trusted to Deliver'. Next up, she secured a base in

Westminster's Lord North Street (named after the PM 'who lost America') owned by Tory supporter Lord Greville Howard. The Moynihan money-till began ringing loudly. She had cash. She had momentum. She was in business.

But she wasn't yet in the race. According to the rules announced that Monday by Graham Brady, Chair of the 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers, candidates had to acquire the backing of twenty MPs by the following day if they were to make it to the first of the two leadership rounds. Eleven candidates announced their intention to run. 'I was holding the pen. It was a real struggle whether we'd get those twenty signatures committed by 4 p.m. on Tuesday,' said loyalist MP Ranil Jayawardena, 'but we did it by 2 p.m.' Coffey was her proposer, right-winger Simon Clarke seconder, 'the idea being to have two Cabinet ministers from different ends of the party'.⁵ Prominent among the twenty was her near neighbour in Greenwich, Kwasi Kwarteng, already earmarked for Chancellor, and James Cleverly, who had worked with her closely as junior minister at the Foreign Office.

Round 1: The MPs (12–20 July)

Tuesday 12 July brought big news: the public endorsement of Truss by two of Johnson's staunchest supporters, Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries and Minister of State for Brexit Opportunities Jacob Rees-Mogg. Here was evidence that Johnson himself, destined to be a massive influence on the campaign, might favour her among the candidates. Better still, and in contravention of the protocol that only the PM speaks from the street outside No. 10, they made their announcement with the famous black door in the background. 'Boris had spoken through his two most loyal lieutenants.' However, there was a caveat, a crucial one: 'It was less a positive vote of confidence in her than a move to thwart Rishi,' said a Johnson insider.

'Liz was always opposed to Rishi's higher taxes. [She expounds] proper Conservatism... she's got the character to lead the party and the nation,'

intoned Rees-Mogg to waiting journalists. ‘I have sat with Liz in Cabinet now for some time. [I’m] very aware that she’s probably a stronger Brexiteer than both of us,’ he added.⁶ Not figures of great political gravitas maybe, but gold dust all the same because of the imprimatur of Johnson. The suggestion was that Truss would be the best candidate to carry the Brexit flag forward.

That mattered because the leadership field was rich with more authentic Brexiteer candidates. A ConservativeHome survey of Tory members published as the contest opened put Penny Mordaunt top on 20 per cent, Kemi Badenoch on 19 per cent, Rishi Sunak on 12 per cent and Suella Braverman on 10 per cent. Fifth and last, and the only one known not to have voted for Brexit, was Liz Truss, scraping in at nearly 10 per cent.⁷ The onetime matinee idol on the ConservativeHome website, who had unsettled Johnson so much he’d sent her to the wasteland of the Foreign Office in September 2021, had sunk to the floor. She had work to do.

Three candidates were eliminated before the first hurdle for not reaching the magic number of twenty MP backers. They included two heavyweights: former Chancellor Sajid Javid and long-term Cabinet survivor Grant Shapps, as well as the backbencher Rehman Chishti. Eight made the cut.

One name was conspicuously missing, a figure who had topped an earlier poll in ConservativeHome and would likely have won the race to be leader: Defence Secretary Ben Wallace. He had long circled the job and had been one of the first to advocate Johnson succeeding May. Many MPs and newspapers were impressed by his steadfast support for Ukraine. Indeed, for several months following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, he had been fighting a proxy leadership battle with Johnson and Truss for who could appear the most belligerent.

Wallace’s mastery of the defence brief over several years had won him admirers across the party, despite it not usually being a ministerial position that allows the holder much domestic glory. It has never served as a launchpad to No. 10. Many MPs nevertheless saw him as the figure best placed to unite the party. Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi was signed up to be

his deputy, a powerful combination. But personal issues troubled the Defence Secretary. He had recently separated from his wife.⁸ He worried about the media exposure that his candidature would bring, and the effect on his children of his moving into Downing Street. 'I'm considering it', was the most he would say to those urging him on. When the nominations were announced, his name was conspicuously missing, to the relief of the other candidates. He let it be known that he was putting his family ahead of his personal ambition.

Another prominent name missing was that of Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove. He realized he didn't have a serious chance after his attempts in 2016 and 2019, but now saw himself as the puppet master. Truss was petrified of what he might do and whether he would try to bring her down, as she was spooked by his former acolyte, Dominic Cummings, whom she'd encountered at the Department for Education where she'd cut her teeth as a minister under Gove from 2012 to 2014. 'At Education she picked up on some causes like Maths and STEM for girls, but she didn't know how to work with officials, other ministers or the Coalition', was one colleague's later verdict. Gove threw his considerable battalions behind the outsider candidate, Kemi Badenoch, who had only entered the Commons at May's 2017 general election.

The first round of voting among MPs followed almost immediately on Wednesday 13 July. The rules, introduced by William Hague in 1998, specified that candidates be eliminated each round until just two remained. Those two would then go forward to the second round to have their mettle tested by rank-and-file members of the Conservative Party. The system opened up the dangerous possibility, as occurred in 2001 with Iain Duncan Smith, that the first choice among MPs was not the figure chosen by the party members at large. It was not a happy precedent.

The bar in the first round at the MPs stage was set at 30 votes. Two fell at this fence: Zahawi received the support of just 25 and Jeremy Hunt 18. Sunak, with 88 votes and Mordaunt with 67 were the clear front runners. They were to hold the top two positions until the last round. Sunak was the person Truss disliked most in the contest. She thought he and the Treasury

were dragging their feet over sanctions on those who fuelled the Russian war machine and she called him ‘Russhi Sunak’ behind his back. Sunak was not the bookies’ favourite either, nor that of journalists: ‘It is hard – but not impossible – to see how [Mordaunt] does not get onto the final ballot for party members, and current pollings suggest she would then win by a mile,’ said the *Guardian* that day.⁹ Mordaunt didn’t realize how perilous being in the top two was going to prove, or how personal and vicious the campaign would become.

Truss came third in the first ballot with just 50 votes, followed by Badenoch (40), Tom Tugendhat (37) and Braverman (32). She was gloomy when she heard the results: she was exhausted, still not fully recovered from jet lag nor the frenzy of her return. She didn’t think she could do it and her mood collapsed. On Thursday 14 July at her official campaign launch, she misread her script, stumbled over words and paused inexplicably mid-sentence. At the end, as her supporters applauded, she appeared momentarily lost and could not find the exit, which was hidden by standing spectators. She walked in the wrong direction, looking the wrong way, before an aide rescued her. ‘Robotic, brain-dead, managing to make Theresa May sound engaging, animated, and personable’, was journalist John Crace’s gleeful verdict.¹⁰

Adding to her worries was the defeated Hunt. He urged his supporters to back Sunak, many of whom were already in no mood to let Mordaunt breeze through. Truss’s team believed that the ‘axis of evil’ behind Sunak was vicious, and had been responsible for discrediting Zahawi by leaking information about his financial affairs, including offshore shares in his polling company YouGov.¹¹ With respected Cabinet minister Brandon Lewis as his campaign chair, Zahawi could have been a strong candidate. But his protracted denial and obfuscation damaged him.¹² Once Zahawi was out, Truss’s team believed the Team Sunak trashing operation would soon turn its attention on her.

In the second round on Thursday 14 July, Truss managed to maintain third place and with increased support – from 50 up to 64 votes. But Sunak and Mordaunt increased their votes too, to 101 (up from 88) and 83 votes

(up from 67) respectively. Braverman was the one to fall, with just 27 MPs supporting her, with Badenoch (49) and Tugendhat (32) scraping through. The race was on among the five remaining candidates to get Braverman on side. For Truss's team, gaining Braverman's advocacy was deemed an existential challenge. She would bring her hardline Brexit supporters in the European Research Group (ERG) and beyond.

One other big beast was in their sights, though they couldn't get him to declare publicly until the MPs stage was over: ex-Northern Powerhouse Secretary Jake Berry. Having Dorries and Rees-Mogg on side was a huge help given the unrivalled power Johnson still exerted over MPs and members in the country, but further Johnson figures were needed. Close to Johnson personally, Berry had played a pivotal role in his winning the leadership election in 2019. Berry and his backers had thought hard about him running for the leadership as the 'continuity Johnson' candidate before deciding it wouldn't fly. Truss seized on the opportunity. She was still Johnson's Foreign Secretary, and secured a phone call with him to discuss the matter. 'Jake is a great guy and would be a good lieutenant for you,' he told her – hardly a ringing endorsement but serviceable. She was desperate to keep Johnson happy. The truth was that both needed the other in a loveless marriage: she professed affection for him in public while differing wildly on policy; he needed her to keep Sunak down. They both knew the game: he was the king- or queen-maker, she the supplicant. So Berry joining her team was a win for both. Once on board, he educated her team about what 'Boris supporters were after, and how they could hook them'. 'Having Jake was clear, palpable evidence that Boris supported Liz,' said one.

Berry was pivotal too in landing a much bigger fish: the PM-manqué Ben Wallace. He was the number one person every candidate wanted: a nod from him could make or break them. But he had history with Truss, most recently resenting the arriviste Foreign Secretary spouting about military subjects he knew much more about. Wallace knew his support was solid gold, demanding a pledge of 3 per cent plus of GDP going to defence spending. Backing for his candidacy to become Secretary General of

NATO, something that would always be difficult because of French and European resistance, was another demand. The haggling went on for days and it was not till the end of the month that he came out in public for her, declaring, ‘She stands her ground. Above all, she is straight and means what she says.’¹³ No one could accuse him of perjury. It did the trick.

With MPs going back to their constituencies on Fridays, the third round could not be held until Monday 18 July. The Truss team was in panic mode. Kemi Badenoch, the feisty Minister of State for Equalities with firm anti-‘woke’ beliefs, was seen as the exciting insurgent candidate on the right, and the one around whom momentum was building. Could she edge Truss into fourth place? If that happened, her team worried she might not recover. A planned debate on Channel 4 on Friday 15 July created angst: should she take part? The worry was she would be wooden in front of cameras. Memories of a robotic Theresa May frozen in front of television cameras flashed across their minds. But once the other contenders put their names forward, she had no alternative but to pitch up. Frenzied preparations took place at her Lord North Street HQ.

First out of the blocks in the live debate was Sunak who accused his four opponents of promising unfunded tax cuts that bordered on ‘socialism’. Truss was equally pugnacious, building up to what she hoped would be a rousing peroration, only for it to fall short: ‘We face grave challenges as a country, the worst economic crisis for a generation [and] an appalling war generated by Russia in Ukraine, after decades of very slow growth...’

‘Well, no doubt who lost that one, is there?’ wrote Sean O’Grady in the *Independent*. ‘An indifferent public speaker at the best of times, she’s sadly just as bad as... a few years back. Boris Johnson must be fuming... Liz had herself made up so that she resembled an animatronic waxwork Margaret Thatcher... It didn’t work.’¹⁴ Few diverged from that assessment.

Sunak’s team decided it was time to knock Mordaunt off her perch; if Sunak faced her in the run-off among party members, he would lose. From 14 to 17 July, Mordaunt duly came under fire. The *Daily Mail* hit her hard for her views on transgender rights, while Truss and Badenoch attacked her in the Channel 4 debate for supporting ‘gender self-identification’.

Mordaunt damaged herself by denying it, but official documents leaked to *The Sunday Times* on 17 July seemed to prove that she had attempted to remove ‘at least one medical requirement’ of the process before people can legally transition gender.¹⁵

The Truss camp opened up another flank of the attack on Mordaunt. International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan, an early Truss supporter, came out on 18 July in a coordinated personal strike: when she had been Mordaunt’s ministerial boss at the Department for International Trade, colleagues had ‘to pick up the pieces’ due to her absences.¹⁶ When Mordaunt’s supporters responded with ‘well, she would say that, wouldn’t she?’, the Truss team encouraged David Frost to go on the record saying that when he had been her boss at the Cabinet Office, Mordaunt didn’t do the work and he had ‘grave reservations’ about her being Prime Minister.¹⁷ Mordaunt’s team hit back hard suspecting foul play. When she had worked with Frost, he had nothing but praise for her. Trevelyan had deliberately blocked her from gaining any credit, they suspected on the direct instructions of Johnson. But it was too late. ‘We did not know whether the Sunak and Truss teams were working together or separately to do her down; what we did know is that they both wanted her out of the way,’ said one of her team. The contest was becoming very dirty. These multiple blows were to prove fatal for Mordaunt.

More good news followed for Truss. She had told her team that she would not make job offers to anybody to secure their votes. But Suella Braverman would have to be an exception. On the morning of Thursday 14 July, Truss had phoned her, saying, ‘If you stay out of the third ballot, I will make you Home Secretary.’ Braverman turned her down but when she was knocked out that night, she called her back: ‘I’ll come out and back you tonight, if I am given the Home Office, and I will deliver my supporters.’ Given the knife edge, Truss felt she had no choice but to accept. Their relationship was difficult. Though both were on the right of the party, they were miles apart on immigration: ‘Liz was pretty liberal, whereas for Suella, it was totemic,’ said Jason Stein.¹⁸ Truss was to bitterly regret her promise.

She received another boost going into the weekend when former party leader and right-wing cheerleader Iain Duncan Smith came out in support of her. He praised her for being ‘strong on Brexit’ and implying that other candidates hadn’t done as much to deliver on its benefits. This helped to lessen the perception of her as a Remainer. It had been a struggle for her team to get Duncan Smith over the line. Although he was ideologically 100 per cent behind her, not least in her vehement views on China, he was hoping for Foreign or Work and Pensions Secretary, for which she had other plans. Not all previous Conservative leaders supported her: in particular, William Hague and Michael Howard supported Sunak, while John Major, David Cameron and Theresa May held their counsel.

Truss was nervous about how she’d fare in round three on Monday 18 July, far from sure she’d make it through. This time, however, it was Chair of the Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee Tom Tugendhat who came fifth and fell off the bottom. Truss was backed by 71, picking up just three of Braverman’s 27 votes. First-place Sunak was racing away with 115 votes, Mordaunt stalling in second place on 82, while fourth-placed Badenoch was moving up the ladder and snapping at Truss’s heels, with 58.

For the next round, Badenoch was the candidate to beat. A ConservativeHome survey had suggested she would win a vote among party members. The support of Gove helped make her a force to be reckoned with. ‘Liz, it would be much better if you backed me so together we can stop Rishi,’ she said. Truss, however, would have none of it, believing that she herself had the overwhelming support from the right and that she didn’t need Badenoch. All four teams around the surviving candidates were working in overdrive. Any remaining restraints were cast aside in the race for the prize. Each tried to persuade Tugendhat to declare for them with his thirty-one votes. But why should he declare his hand now with the result so unclear? He refused to commit in public. Truss’s team watched as they saw the ‘Sunak bully boys Gavin Williamson and Julian Smith cornering people in the Chamber, promising promotions, or having ugly words with them. Williamson can be quite brutal,’ said one. Wild rumours went round of honours and peerages proffered by all sides.

In the fourth round on Tuesday 19 July, it was Truss who made the breakthrough. The results placed Sunak first with 118 (up 3), Mordaunt on 92 (up 10) and Truss third on 86 (up 15). Badenoch had been eliminated after achieving just 59 (up 1). For the first time in the race, Truss had momentum. Some of her extra votes came from ten MPs in the Northern Research Group. Founded in 2019 among northern MPs committed to ‘levelling up’, it had publicly supported Tugendhat until he fell in the third round. But now Berry, its chair, communicated to members that ‘Truss best understood the Johnson legacy of winning in the North, and had the right ideas on corporation tax, National Insurance and promoting growth’.¹⁹

In the twelve days since her return from Indonesia and seven days since the first ballot, Truss had gone from nowhere to a serious contender. The fifth and final round took place on Wednesday 20 July. All three remaining candidates were bidding hard to gain Badenoch’s 59 votes. Truss made a great play on the final morning for her Brexit-supporting and ‘Red Wall’ MPs. The future of the country was decided during these hours. Had Mordaunt hung onto her second place as in the previous four rounds, she would have been in the final two and in all likelihood beaten Sunak. Mordaunt would have been a more measured PM and would probably have led the Conservatives into the general election in 2024. ‘I would have pursued a more conservative economic policy to Liz, scrapping tax rises over a longer timeframe and with careful sequencing, but also produced a balanced budget verified by the Office for Budget Responsibility. Immediate tax cuts would have been noninflationary, like halving VAT on fuel at the pump and increasing low- and middle-income tax thresholds,’ she said.²⁰ There would have been no Truss premiership, no financial meltdown and no Sunak premiership. The history of the party, and country, would have been very different.

Sunak’s team preferred Truss to win the final MPs’ vote because they judged her easier to beat than Mordaunt in the membership stage. They believed she was fundamentally silly and would self-destruct; as Williamson put it, ‘We thought she would implode on the campaign trail: we were right, but wrong about the timing.’²¹ Mordaunt’s team were

convinced that the ‘proxy votes’ of some of Sunak supporters were switched from him to Truss, so she would come ahead of Mordaunt. Johnson’s leadership team had done the same in 2019, urging some of his supporters to vote for Hunt in the final MPs round rather than Gove, because they thought that Hunt would be easier to beat. Ultimately, their plan succeeded and it was Hunt who Johnson faced in the run-off. ‘The difference was that we didn’t smear and lie about Jeremy Hunt; they went after Liz mercilessly,’ said one of Truss’s team, the bitterness running deep. ‘It was 2019 all over again when the two former Chief Whips, Gavin Williamson and Julian Smith, persuaded people to vote tactically to ensure Boris won. Penny stood no chance against them,’ said one pro-Mordaunt MP.

The final result ‘was precarious, she could’ve done much better’, recalled Kwarteng. Sunak topped on 137 votes (up 19). Truss for the first time made it into second place with 113 votes (up 27), and Mordaunt, who came third, was eliminated with 105 votes (up 13).

How did Truss’s team react to the news? They were all with her in her parliamentary office huddled around the television to listen to Graham Brady of the 1922 Committee deliver the MPs’ verdict. The results were announced in alphabetical order by surname. When Truss’s result was announced last, there was an odd mood in the room. ‘I felt a slight sense of dread when I heard. And I’m sure I was not the only one thinking “Is she really up to it?”,’ recalled one aide. In Mordaunt’s office nearby, there was total despondency and disbelief at her fall. In Sunak’s office as captured on a video that his team released that day, there was no reaction when Mordaunt’s 105 votes were declared, total silence at Sunak’s 137 votes but wild cheering when Truss’s 113 votes were announced, palpable proof to the Mordaunt camp that she had fallen victim to Team Sunak’s machinations.

Had just five MPs voted the other way Mordaunt would have won. Reeling from the result, she said, ‘We must all now work together to unify our party.’ No such largesse from Truss who promised ‘to hit the ground’ as

Prime Minister, a statement rapidly amended by her team to include the word ‘running’.²²

Round 2: The Party Members in the Country (21 July–5 September)

Sunak and Truss now went forward to the ‘winner takes all’ round: a vote by the 172,437 paid-up Tory members. It is thought that over half were aged over sixty, 97 per cent were white, and the majority lived in southern England.²³ This composition is significant because Truss, with her scarcely concealed contempt for Conservative MPs, thought she spoke for ordinary British people, which she conflated in her mind with the party membership.

The competition began the second the MPs’ vote was announced, with the first hustings on Thursday 21 July in Westminster, and the first TV debate on the BBC on Monday 25 July. Postal ballots were sent out to arrive between 1 and 5 August, with the polls closing on 2 September. The winner to succeed the still-sitting and still-fuming Boris Johnson as Prime Minister would be announced three days later, on Monday 5 September.

The Commons went into summer recess on Friday 22 July after one of its bitterest sessions. The ritual Tory dogfight was now on to claim Thatcher’s mantle.

Truss for some months had been modelling herself as a modern-day Thatcher, not least with her version of the iconic photograph of Thatcher in a British tank with the Union Jack. Even her clothes in the first TV debate bore a striking similarity to Thatcher in an election broadcast in 1979.²⁴ ‘Common sense Thatcherism’ was how Sunak described his own economic plan on 21 July.²⁵ Two days later, Tory grandees Norman Lamont and Malcolm Rifkind attacked Truss’s plans, saying that Thatcher would never have approved borrowing to fund £30 billion tax cuts.²⁶ While both candidates claimed Thatcher’s mantle, there could be no doubting that Truss was the Johnson continuity candidate, and that Sunak was despised by Team Johnson.

Ever since Iain Duncan Smith won against Ken Clarke in 2001, and Michael Howard was unopposed in 2003, the conventional wisdom was that the more right wing the candidate, the more likely they were to win among party members. As the contest intensified, both would-be leaders tried to burnish their right-wing credentials, each claiming to be tougher on China and on immigration. Team Sunak had the opponent they wanted. There was all to play for. Huge energy was poured into the competition in the country by both teams. An Opinion poll from 6 to 8 July had put Sunak ahead of Truss. Sunak's team believed they could do it. But on the day the contest officially began, 21 July, much was made of a new poll suggesting that Truss was on course to win. Two days later, Sunak admitted that he was the underdog.²⁷ From early August, she was regularly polling 60 per cent, with Sunak averaging 35 per cent. Sunak's team clung to their belief that their man was better, and that Truss was stupid and capricious, and that she would self-destruct.

Stage 2 of Truss's strategy was masterminded by veteran campaigner Mark Fullbrook, the long-term business partner of legendary Conservative electoral strategist Lynton Crosby. Ever since Isaac Levido had turned her down, Truss had been searching for a top electoral strategist; Porter had been effective during the early part of the campaign, but Truss now wanted a more established figure, who could better command her team, as chief of staff.

Fullbrook joined the team on 25 July, bringing order and discipline to an amorphous campaign. His focus was politics and messaging. Porter became deputy chief of staff, continuing her work on operations. His strategy was simple: 'Rishi Sunak has only one great claim to having any credibility to win in the country: that he has more Conservative MPs backing him, based on his coming first in the MPs stage. Our whole strategy was set out to prove that is not true, and it is she who has more MPs and support.'²⁸ 'We made a big, big push at this stage to solidify Boris supporters,' said one aide.

That quest was helped considerably by the naked self-interest of many Conservative MPs. Who would want to declare support for a doomed

candidate? Some high-minded politicians aside, most were thinking less of which candidate might best serve the country as Prime Minister than who might best serve their own interests. First out of the blocks in a tightly choreographed sequence of reveals were one-time Thatcher policy chief John Redwood and chair of the ERG Mark Francois on Monday 25 July. By the end of that week, Ben Wallace, Tom Tugendhat, Brandon Lewis and Nadhim Zahawi had endorsed her. Heavyweights all, sending a clear message to the undecided about who to back. Lewis had, at the start of the month, resigned as Northern Ireland Secretary and abandoned Johnson, while Zahawi had remained in the fray to the bitter end as Chancellor.

‘It’s all about momentum,’ said Fullbrook, who followed up these endorsements on Monday 1 August with a piece of careful stage management that redefined the whole competition. The defenestrated Mordaunt abruptly popped up in public to introduce Truss at membership hustings in Exeter saying that she admired her ‘authenticity, her determination, her ambition for her country, consistency and sense of duty’.²⁹ Two days later, Javid declared for her and came out defending her financial plans. This was succour Javid would not forget when, as we shall see, one of Truss’s aides made some dismissive remarks about him to a journalist. Then on 12 August, Badenoch came out declaring that Truss was ‘a maverick who gets things done’.³⁰ By mid-August, five of the last eight leadership candidates had declared for her. Apart from herself and Sunak, that meant that only Hunt had come out in public to back Sunak. Nine of Johnson’s final Cabinet were supporting her too: Wallace, Javid, Kwarteng, Trevelyan, Coffey, Zahawi, Lewis, Dorries and Rees-Mogg.

They might be endorsing her, but how far was it a marriage of convenience rather than a love-match? At the time, no one cared. They were names, and massive ones. By mid-campaign, the team boasted that she had 162 MPs on side, including twenty-eight current or former Cabinet ministers, fifteen members of the Scottish Parliament and five members of the Welsh Senedd. Team Truss could also claim they had support from six national newspapers: the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express*, and the *Evening*

Standard. The Times wouldn't be swayed; 'But to be honest, most Conservative members regarded it as a lefty broadsheet of little interest to them,' said one Trussite. Winning over the right-wing press had been regarded as fundamental given their inability to communicate directly with the electorate (neither team was allowed by the rules to know who the Conservative members were). 'I put most store in winning over the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Telegraph*,' said Fullbrook.³¹ Ranking next in his hierarchy 'was feeding Guido Fawkes the right information that he would publish on his website. Then, ConservativeHome, albeit no longer possessing the power it once had, and finally, the influential WhatsApp groups.' Truss's 162 MPs were more than Sunak had, if still twenty short of an overall majority. Given the numbers of MPs hedging their bets, or disenchanted by either offer, neither candidate was going to have a majority.

Sunak was toast. He had been outplayed at every point. He could claim no similar list of prominent Cabinet ministers prepared to hitch their wagons to his faltering campaign. Some of those who endorsed him were impressive but, with one exception, they had committed themselves early on while he still stood a good chance: Steve Barclay, Oliver Dowden, George Eustice, Michael Gove, Simon Hart, Dominic Raab and Grant Shapps. The exception was of course Gove, political to his fingertips. When his favoured candidate Badenoch had been knocked out, he faced a dilemma. He loved high office and was far better at it than most other ministers, but he knew that he would never be offered a Cabinet position by Truss. So on 19 August he threw in his lot with the Sunak camp. 'I do not expect to be in government again,' he declared (and who could know at the time how wrong that would prove?). 'But it was the privilege of my life to spend 11 years in the cabinet under three Prime Ministers. I know what the job requires. And Rishi has it.'³² Even then he was careful not to slam the door, praising Truss as 'tenacious, brave and [with] a huge appetite for policy detail' and 'admirably clear, consistent and principled in the case she has made'. Every word carefully weighed.

Two 'crossed the floor' from Sunak to Truss, the cause of great bitterness: Robert Buckland and Chris Skidmore. Neither were 'A-team'

players. None crossed in the opposite direction.³³ A small number held their noses refusing to endorse publicly either candidate, including Alister Jack, Priti Patel and Alok Sharma. Among the ‘non-declarers’ was the King across the Chilterns, Boris Johnson. He was ‘reclusive [and] in a world of his own’, according to his team, even though nominally still Prime Minister. The deep gloom that often descends on Prime Ministers on borrowed time had settled on him, and he was wallowing, according to friends, in periodic troughs of self-pity. At his delayed wedding to Carrie Symonds, held at supporter Lord Bamford’s stately home Daylesford House in the Cotswolds on Saturday 30 July, his conversation and speech were dominated by why he should still be Prime Minister, and how the crown had been stolen from him. A YouGov poll of Tory members just after the wedding that placed him ahead of Sunak and Truss did nothing to quiet his feelings of betrayal.³⁴ When asked by MPs who they should support, he would say, with varying degrees of conviction, ‘Liz Truss’. But in private, he remained disparaging of her. As long as Sunak remained a serious contender, though, he was in no doubt. Sunak was increasingly and vehemently blamed for the premature end of his premiership. He never blamed himself, naturally. Truss had to win! Hence he and his lieutenants including Zahawi peddled the betrayal thesis far and wide, knowing that it would damage Sunak and benefit Truss. ‘Boris understands power better than any of us. He was watching the drama carefully, engineering it all the way,’ said one in his camp.

Team Truss had just one blip during this part of the campaign, miraculous given the fear she was accident-prone. On 1 August, she was en route to Exeter by helicopter where she would receive Mordaunt’s blessing, while the campaign declared a ‘War on Whitehall Waste’ to save a claimed £8 billion through adopting ‘regional pay boards’ for certain grades of civil servant that would ‘tailor pay to the cost of living where civil servants actually work’.³⁵ The plan, which ticked many boxes, including bashing civil servants, seemed clever policy. While discussing it, the team had considered the impact of such a plan on a wider class of public servants such as doctors, nurses, teachers and military personnel, but had ruled it out as politically unacceptable. However, the £8 billion cited on the press

release had been calculated in connection with reducing the pay of public servants as a whole, not the intended narrower class of civil servants. ‘An oversight of proofing rather than a conscious decision,’ one adviser remarked.

Labour and Sunak’s team couldn’t believe their good fortune, and made all the political capital they could for twenty-four hours until the inevitable U-turn. At Millbank Tower – the new home of the Truss campaign, after leaving Lord North Street in late July – Adam Jones and Jamie Hope decided that the policy was unsalvageable, and called Truss to ask permission to withdraw it. She agreed. A message was sent to the press lobby insisting that ‘current levels of public sector pay will absolutely be maintained’.³⁶

According to one of her advisers, Truss ‘was furious as she had zero tolerance for mistakes’. The finger of blame was firmly pointed at Jones, and, by implication, close teammates Hope and Jarvis. No long-term damage was sustained, though the fallout highlighted existing tensions within Truss’s team and her inability or unwillingness to assert her authority. Indeed, like Johnson, she positively revelled in setting off one group against another.

The real ire, though, was not within the team but between the two front runners and their followers. The hostility only grew when it became evident Truss would win. Her team believed that Sunak supporter Oliver Dowden was using the leverage he had possessed as Party Chair to have a say over the party’s conduct of the campaign. The accusations did not have to be wholly, or even partially, true to count. What mattered was that the Truss camp believed them to be true. ‘They only wanted one candidate left by the end of the membership stage,’ said one of her team. How would they make this happen? ‘By so intimidating Truss with talk of a thick dossier of her indiscretions, her drinking and even cocaine use by others among her team, that she would lose all credibility, and would throw in her hat rather than face trial by newspapers.’ Suspicions of who had compiled the dossier – which never materialized – fell principally on CCHQ insiders. Rumours of her indiscretions, still widely believed, were sourced to this time. The

recriminations went further. ‘They tried to force through two votes per member to give members the chance to retract their earlier vote for Truss in favour of Sunak,’ said one of her supporters. ‘So terrible did they think Liz was, all the voters needed was a chance to really examine her, and they would amend their vote,’ said another. ‘You can’t have two votes,’ Fullbrook shouted down the telephone to Dowden mid-campaign. The bitterness this generated had an enduring impact.

Team Truss protested that they never engaged in similar tactics or smears. ‘We never went for Rishi’s tax status, wealth, the US green card, or his wife Akshata Murty’s business connections,’ one said. But they were not whiter than white. Nadine Dorries, perhaps best known for her neat put-down of David Cameron and George Osborne in 2012 as ‘two posh boys who don’t know the price of milk’, was one of the wider camp free with their comments.³⁷ She contrasted Truss’s £4.50 earrings with Sunak’s £3,500 suit, and accused him of ‘planning a coup’, having earlier ‘ruthlessly and metaphorically stabbed Boris Johnson in the back’.³⁸ ‘The stab in the back lie to bring Boris down’ was one of the key factors Team Sunak thought responsible for his loss. One card the Truss camp never played was race, even though Sunak’s camp thought it a factor at the margins. ‘I don’t think Tory voters overall are racist. Where I think it might have counted was in a marginal way. Had Rishi’s father-in-law been white, wealth might not have become such an issue. So an undertone,’ said one highly placed figure on Sunak’s campaign.

Truss refused to believe she could win for a long time. ‘I’ll focus on the campaign, I’ve won nothing yet,’ she regularly told Jason Stein.³⁹ But then she changed quite suddenly as the realization dawned. ‘Am I going to win?’ she asked Fullbrook at the Cheltenham hustings on 11 August. ‘Yes, you will.’ ‘Will you bet your life on it?’ ‘Yes, I will bet my life,’ he replied.⁴⁰ ‘Her whole demeanour changed. She no longer wanted to listen to us but sought the counsel of others,’ lamented a member of her old team.

The campaign dragged on for another three weeks, even though most members had voted. At the final hustings in London on 31 August, Truss was introduced by Iain Duncan Smith, while Sunak came on stage with a

riff on his position as the trailing candidate: ‘Britain loves an underdog.’ Final opinion polls gave Sunak some hope, with Truss showing a dramatic loss of support among those who voted Conservative in 2019. Just 31 per cent believed she ‘looks like a Prime Minister in waiting’ compared to 49 per cent a month earlier, and only 35 per cent thinking her ‘competent’ in late August down from 55 per cent at the start of the month, a similar fall being shown in those who found her ‘likeable’.⁴¹ The final result was declared by Graham Brady in Westminster on Monday 5 September: Truss won 57.4 per cent of the party members’ votes to Sunak’s 42.6 per cent, a narrower margin than most polls suggested. Just 141,725 had voted, representing 0.3 per cent of the British electorate. This is a telling detail given Truss came to believe that what she heard on the campaign trail was what the British public at large thought. When going up to make her acceptance speech, there was no handshake or word of consolation to her competitor. This was said to be more thoughtlessness than deliberate rudeness, but indicative of her lack of empathy. When preparing her acceptance speech, she had turned to her speechwriter to ask, ‘Can we have a bit more about Boris and a bit less about Rishi?’ The surprised aide, who had been following precedent in including something positive about the person who had been defeated, asked innocently, ‘How much about Rishi?’ ‘How about nothing about Rishi,’ she replied curtly. ‘As you will,’ he said.⁴² Ultimately, she decided to rewrite the speech herself.

The Verdict: Secure the Power Base?

Had she really won? She may have gained more Cabinet ministers and MPs’ endorsements than Sunak, but many were sceptical, cynical and even angry. Only fifty MPs had voted for her in the first round, and even that number was approaching the upper limit of the true believers. The ‘Truss project’ remained a niche idea, supported by a minority of not very influential politicians: none of her ideological soulmates such as Kwarteng, Rees-Mogg, Clarke, Dorries and Jayawardena had deep roots in the parliamentary party. Conservative MPs at large supported her free market,

low tax, small state and growth ideals – Tories usually do. But not with her fervour. Nor speed. Nor with her championing these ideals.

Had the rules before the Hague reforms of 1998 still been in operation, with MPs being the ultimate deciders, Sunak would have won and become Prime Minister in July, a fact his team never forgot. She won among members, but members were not her ultimate guarantors of continuation in office. MPs were. They were waiting for her to prove herself. Many were sorry or worse that Wallace, Mordaunt or Sunak hadn't won. Especially Sunak's supporters. She was already walking on very thin ice.

The reasons she won came back to haunt her. Her campaign was much better run than Sunak's, as his team admit. Indeed, they were genuinely surprised that she didn't exhibit the same level of skill in No. 10 that she had in the campaign. Placing the spotlight on her personal journey up from comprehensive school, in contrast to rich public schoolboy Sunak, invited a focus on her personality and intellect, neither of which she was capable of sustaining. Portraying Sunak as the assassin of Johnson, trumpeted not least in the *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*, won her votes but caused the deep divisions in the party to increase further. The 'betrayal thesis' was concocted on a lie: as shown in *Johnson at 10*, there was plotting by Sunak lieutenants – there are always plots, and talk of plots, at the end of premierships, not the least Thatcher's⁴³ – but Johnson was brought down by his own political ineptitude and inability to take responsibility.⁴⁴ Truss would never have won without the Johnson stamp of approval. Her victory was thus underpinned by a falsity. 'The membership was still in grief about Boris. Like him, she told them what they wanted to hear, big cuts to taxes,' said Gove.⁴⁵ But had she also won on a false *prospectus*? Like the Brexit referendum in 2016, had she made promises that could never be completely fulfilled?

Maintaining loyal MPs and a secure majority in Parliament is our first test for a successful premiership. Did Truss meet that criterion? She certainly had a working majority inherited from Johnson. However, she had MPs who were suspending their judgement rather than MPs who were loyal or who liked her. She never had the same legitimacy of a Prime Minister

who had won their own mandate. Anyone taking over as Prime Minister in the autumn of 2022, with the Conservative Party in civil war, and the country facing a cost of living crisis at home and war abroad, would need to tread carefully, uniting friends and foes in common cause.

Is that what she did? We now turn to examine Project Truss.



Rule Number Two: Have a clear and realistic plan for government. Truss arrives in No. 10 as Prime Minister on Tuesday 6 September. She had a clear plan, but it was not a realistic one

2

HAVE A CLEAR AND REALISTIC PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT

‘S he is guided by an underlying ideology in a way our last three Conservative Prime Ministers [Cameron, May, Johnson] have not been.’¹ So said Mark Littlewood, Truss’s friend since student days at Oxford and fellow traveller on the free-market highway (via brief stopovers at the Lib Dem and pro-EU service stations). Both had risen to the top of their chosen professions: for Truss politics, and for Littlewood, presiding over Britain’s oldest and most influential free-market think tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). Now the thinker and the doer were poised together to make history.

They were about to hatch the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of economic and institutional reform in Britain since Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, and the most wide-ranging package of tax cuts since Ted Heath’s ‘dash for growth’ in 1972.

Successful Premierships Require Clear Agendas

So far, so good. Every premier since the emergence of modern party government in the mid-nineteenth century has had at least some idea of what they would like to do in office. But to be successful the plans have needed to be *realistic*. The most successful Prime Ministers since the office was created in 1721, including William Pitt the Younger, Robert Peel, William Gladstone, David Lloyd George, Clement Attlee and Margaret Thatcher, all knew – to quote Germany’s great nineteenth-century chancellor Otto von Bismarck – that politics was ‘the art of the possible’.²

Had she studied her history, Truss would have known that none of the nine agenda-changing Prime Ministers came to office at the tail end of a

long period of one-party ascendancy outside of the exigencies of a world war (Lloyd George in 1916 and Churchill in 1940). She was therefore attempting something never before achieved.

Those who underachieved as PMs either hadn't worked fully through what they wanted to do before they came to office, such as Lord Rosebery and Anthony Eden, or misjudged the politics or the economics, or both, like Ramsay MacDonald and Ted Heath. Some of those who didn't optimize their opportunities may have had considerable achievements to their name, but like Tony Blair moved too slowly when they had the most political capital, while others, like Heath after 1970, moved too quickly.

Prime Ministers who come to power after a general election victory have a greatly enhanced opportunity to articulate and embed a programme worked up over several months or years in opposition. Those like Harold Macmillan, James Callaghan and John Major who inherited mid-term struggled to find the time and opportunity to articulate their own distinctive vision. They also inevitably faced questions about their mandate from the electorate to justify any midterm change of course. The general election was won in December 2019 on Boris Johnson's manifesto, which was still far from enacted by mid-2022, and here was Truss wanting to take the country off in a radically new direction. Yes, she had presented her platform candidly and repeatedly to MPs and to Conservative members, but not to the electorate on whom the medicine was to be administered.

Truss's ultimate aim was to follow the path of mid-term arriviers Macmillan, Major and Johnson and win her own general election mandate as they did. But she knew that the growing unpopularity of the party meant she would have to go long and not call the general election until the last minute in late 2024, hence upon her personal victory she promised 'a great victory for the Conservative Party in 2024'.³ She wanted to pass her economic plan as soon as possible, to give the maximum chance for positive impact before voters made up their minds.

Too many Prime Ministers have arrived at No. 10 with 'at best a shopping list, at worst a collection of slogans', as Harold Wilson's biographer Ben Pimlott memorably put it, of his return to Downing Street in

March 1974.⁴ Alas, slogans are what the British public has tended to receive instead of defined agendas from its Prime Ministers in the intervening fifty years. They arrive on the doorstep of No. 10 for their ritual first speech as the nation's leader bursting with high-minded ideals. To Thatcher in 1979, it was St Francis of Assisi's 'Where there is discord, may we bring harmony.' To Major in 1990: 'A country that is at ease with itself.' 'A mandate to bring this nation together, to unite us,' was Blair's offering in 1997. Brown was inspired by his school motto in 2007 to pledge that 'I will try my utmost'. When Cameron won his own majority for the Conservatives in 2015, he promised, 'We can make Britain a place where a good life is in reach for everyone who is willing to work and do the right thing.' May had a tighter mission in 2016, to fight 'burning injustices'. Johnson's vision included 'uniting our country' and 'answering at last the plea of the forgotten people', as well as defying 'the doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters'. They all, or mostly all, did their best to live up to the aspirations that they articulated. Thatcher largely sidestepped her uplifting motto, replacing it with an agenda that soon became known as 'Thatcherism', defined as 'a mixture of free markets, financial discipline, firm control over public expenditure, tax cuts, nationalism, "Victorian Values"... privatisation, and a dash of populism' by her long-serving Chancellor, Nigel Lawson.⁵

With Truss, there was no pussyfooting around. She was going to give the country her agenda with both barrels from day one.

Personal and Political Journey: 1975–2012

Sunak's team tried to besmirch Truss during the leadership contest for flip-flopping: the Liberal Democrat who became a Conservative, and the Remainder who became an ardent Brexiteer. Such jibes miss the strong core running through her thinking. 'She is, and always has been, a market liberal with a deep suspicion of entrenched, vested interests. She instinctively believes the state has a greater propensity to do harm than to do good,' as Littlewood puts it.⁶

The ‘Truss project’ was an amalgam of several different elements that she encountered at Oxford and beyond. These ideas motivated her to go into politics, and underpinned her actions. They were blended with an exceptionally high degree of ambition and self-belief, as a politician and a minister.⁷

Margaret Thatcher was the first serving Prime Minister whose name she heard spoken as a young child. Thatcher had moved into Downing Street in May 1979 when Truss was three and she quit when Truss was fifteen. The young Truss was captivated by her boldness and ideology.

Free markets, deregulation and liberal economics were all in the ascendant in the 1980s. By the end of the decade, the Soviet Union would be on the verge of collapse, and with it, its grip over Eastern Europe. In China, Deng Xiaoping’s free-market reforms initiated the process of economic transformation from Mao’s communist state. In the United States, President Ronald Reagan’s economic liberalism had proven a success. In the UK, the Labour Party had begun to jettison the left-wing socialist prescriptions of its leader, Michael Foot (1980–83), in favour of embracing growth and the market. The three predictions that my father Arthur Seldon had outlined at the beginning of the decade, that the Soviet Union would not last till the end of the century, that Labour ‘as we know it’ would never govern again and that China would embrace capitalism, all appeared to be coming true.⁸ The atmosphere for Truss was intoxicating.

The 1990s saw the march of economic liberalism continue apace. In January 1990 in Moscow’s Pushkin Square, McDonald’s opened a branch attracting a record 38,000 customers on the first day. President Clinton told America ‘the era of big government is over’.⁹ The European Union created a Single Market in 1993 to boost free trade between member nations. In contrast to her admiration for Thatcher, however, Truss found little to admire in her successor John Major, Prime Minister during Truss’s A-levels and undergraduate years. By the time Major fell to Labour in May 1997, when Truss was twenty-one, her world view had largely been formed. Despite Tony Blair’s abandoning ‘Clause IV’ of the Labour Party constitution that committed it to nationalization, and his embrace of

business, Truss disliked the new government's granting of so much independence to the Bank of England in 1997 and the statist direction of Blair and Brown's economic policies.¹⁰

Real world events excited her more than reading philosophical or economic literature. An autodidact, she discounts the idea that she was influenced by anyone or anything: 'Frankly the influence of the IEA on me has been much overstated,' she said.¹¹ She lacked the intellectual curiosity of Thatcher or the incisive mind of Cameron who achieved a first class degree in PPE at Oxford, the same subject she studied, and she lacked his ability to see nuance and to judge character. History was not her thing: 'She had no sense of it at all or interest in it. I didn't think she read much. I remember she once tried quoting Harold Macmillan, but butchered the point,' recalls Kwasi Kwarteng.¹² Her intellect was governed rather by mathematical reasoning and logic, and she loved to test the ability of others against hers by setting them arithmetical challenges at job interviews. Art, drama, classical music and religion passed her by. She never watched TV. She knew about books rather than read them, her favourite for a while being *What it Takes: The Way to the White House* by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Richard Ben Cramer, an account of the post-Reagan 1988 presidential campaign focusing on the six principal candidates: George Bush, Bob Dole, Michael Dukakis, Richard Gephardt, Gary Hart and Joe Biden. The latter was the only one she would encounter, albeit in unhappy circumstances. Reading about the razzle-dazzle of American electoral politics enchanted her far more than the dry, but often more grounded, political memoirs of British politicians, whose pages she would flick through in search of inspiration.

After university she had spells as a chartered management accountant, working at Royal Dutch Shell and then Cable & Wireless. But politics is what really interested her. She became deputy director of the centre-right think tank Reform in 2008, authoring several reports, including *The Value of Mathematics*. Two years later, she entered Parliament in May 2010 as MP for South West Norfolk, and soon established the Free Enterprise Group that attracted a diverse list of some thirty Thatcherite-leaning MPs including

Coffey, Javid, Kwarteng and Zahawi. The group enabled her first foray into publishing, co-writing *After the Coalition* (2011) and *Britannia Unchained* (2012). The former advocated reducing the top rate of tax to 40 pence in the pound ('George [Osborne] only reduced it in 2012 to 45p – we wanted him to go further,' she said).¹³ Their aim was to influence the content of the Conservative manifesto at the 2015 general election in a pro-capitalist direction. In this, they were unsuccessful. The manifesto was built around the concepts of security and continuity, rather than tax cutting and deregulation.

Kwarteng quickly became her ideological soulmate among the 2010 entrants to Parliament. The same age as Truss, he had attended Eton College before Cambridge where he achieved a double first and then a PhD in economic history. *War and Gold*, his most thoughtful book, was published in 2014. It looked at the history of financial crises, particularly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.¹⁴ Surprisingly, Kwarteng is an advocate of balancing the books and his favourite Chancellor is Neville Chamberlain, who championed that approach.¹⁵ Truss, for all her liking of Kwarteng and admiration for his intellect, did not agree. By 2022, her ambition was effectively to become her own Chancellor. If she was to make it to the very top, 'she would want to be heavily involved in economic policy from the centre and would need a Chancellor who was willing to accept that,' said her economic adviser at No. 10 Shabbir Merali.¹⁶ 'Very few Chancellors would have stood for it, but he was happy to do so: every other conversation was him saying that Rishi was a bad Chancellor because he would argue all the time with the PM; "I won't be like that," he would say,' said one of Kwarteng's economic advisers.¹⁷

Ministerial Career: 2012–22

Truss zipped up the ministerial ladder. But she never felt particularly secure on the rungs, nor was she to win many admirers for her pirouettes as she reached the top. Rumours were common that she was to be dismissed at the next reshuffle. Cameron provided her first break in September 2012 when,

aged thirty-seven, she was appointed a junior minister at Gove's Department for Education with responsibilities including childcare. Despite the promotion, she never made it into Team Gove and was denigrated by Cummings, his special adviser, as a 'human hand grenade' who 'caused chaos instead of getting things done'.¹⁸ Cameron wasn't put off – he had his own battles with Cummings. But he needed seasoned women to promote and the field wasn't vast. In July 2014, he thus offered Truss her first senior post as Environment Secretary, bringing the proportion of women in Cabinet up to a historic one third.

'I think it's bloody disgraceful what the Prime Minister has done to you,' outgoing Environment Secretary Owen Paterson told her on her appointment. 'You've been in parliament for three nanoseconds. You know about education... But here you find yourself dummied into DEFRA where you have no background at all.'¹⁹ Hyperactive on a series of initiatives, she failed to convince either the farming or the environmental lobby that she fully understood her brief. She took time out for the June 2016 referendum to campaign for Remain. 'Her views on Brexit were nicely balanced. She could see the economic advantages of staying in, and the transactional dislocation of leaving, which I think decided it for her,' said Adam Jones. 'But once it happened, she embraced it wholeheartedly, wrapping herself in the flag and setting herself up as the Brexit darling.'²⁰

Cameron's replacement Theresa May had fresh ideas for her, promptly appointing her Justice Secretary and the first ever female Lord Chancellor in July 2016. 'At the Ministry of Justice, I saw close up how bad the institutions were, and how little accountability there is,' she recalled.²¹ Truss fought hard and courageously to increase the number of prison officers after a series of cuts, but fell foul of the legal profession when in November she was accused of failing to support the judiciary after three High Court judges incensed the *Daily Mail* sufficiently for it to run the headline 'Enemies of the People'. Their crime? Ruling against the government on whether the process of leaving the EU could be triggered without Parliament's agreement. Furious calls from across the spectrum were made to No. 10 for Truss to resign for failing to exercise her constitutional position as defender

of the judiciary. May didn't like the noise the row created, nor did her team. And they weren't impressed by what they saw as her serial leaking. 'You could tell when Liz was responsible for a leak because she'd always be painted in a favourable light,' said one May acolyte.²²

May had had enough, and Truss, to her fury, was demoted to the position of Chief Secretary to the Treasury in 2017, allowing her to attend Cabinet, but no longer as a full member. For the first time, she'd experienced a reversal in her upward momentum. It hurt her deeply and unleashed an inner rage. May had no idea what she had done. The defiant Truss was going to show her critics the kind of person she was. 'As Chief Secretary... I aim to be the disruptor-in-chief; I want to challenge those who aim to block change, stop development and restrict success. I want to challenge the caution that strangles risk-takers and go-getters,' she wrote in her favourite daily newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, a month after her appointment.²³ The next day, fortified by a new speechwriter, she gave her most vigorous address yet, calling for liberation at last from state shackles 'from the grainbelt of our agricultural heartlands to the brainbelt bursting out around our great universities... From the port cities to the inland empires... free enterprise... breaks down monopolies, hierarchies and outdated practices. It destroys barriers, and erodes inequality.' Then, in the most ringing section, she extolled free enterprise as 'good for our nation of Airbnb-ing, Deliveroo-eating, Uber-riding freedom fighters'.²⁴

But Truss ran up against the hidebound (as she saw it) Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond. Hammond's view was that his second in command should be like the cerebral David Gauke whom she had replaced. 'I didn't dislike her, as I most definitely did her predecessor as PM. She was quick, analytical and intelligent, if not profound. I thought I could work with her,'²⁵ Hammond said. But she had difficulty understanding why her views were not immediately taken up by others. 'She absolutely hated it when others didn't take her opinions seriously.'²⁶ So wary did Hammond's Treasury become of her that she was excluded from sensitive discussions, which made her even angrier, and which she blamed, unfairly as it happened, on the senior official in the department, Tom Scholar. This would

later have devastating consequences. Once again, rumours circulated that details from documents from her office quickly found their way into the newspapers.

Being at the Treasury allowed her to range widely across every area of government policy, a luxury afforded to ministers in no other department. ‘She was actively engaged well beyond the brief, having great interest in ideas and evidence,’ said Shabbir Merali, who joined as her economic adviser in February 2018.²⁷ Littlewood was one of several thinkers she was talking to as she set up a covert operation to challenge Treasury orthodoxy. For a while, she was fascinated by *The Captured Economy*, a book by two US liberal economists, Brink Lindsey and Steven Teles, who advanced the populist argument that rich individuals and businesses had rewritten the rules of the US economy, ‘capturing’ the regulatory system and using it to squeeze out the competition.

Truss’s low tax, low spending, anti-institution agenda, if still inchoate, was beginning to crystallize. So too was her conviction that she might be destined for the very top, on a mission to put the country back on track after years of decline. By the end of the year, she became a regular presence on Instagram and Twitter, and her team began looking for ostentatious photo opportunities – perhaps peaking during her time as Trade Secretary with the photograph of her on a Brompton bike, holding a Union Jack umbrella, with Sydney’s iconic bridge and opera house in the background. Guided by her adviser Adam Jones, her communications improved markedly, becoming more strategically minded and impactful.

Few things piqued Truss’s curiosity more than the monthly Cabinet popularity ratings on the ConservativeHome website. ‘She would be absolutely glued to it, mesmerized by it,’ said an aide. She would love to see her ranking against her colleagues rise and fall, and she became intrigued by the actions she could take to maximize the opportunities of the former. But currying favour with her colleagues, essential if she was to have a reasonable prospect of becoming leader, did not always rank high. In June 2018, she devoted a speech to tax and spending cuts that contained the intentionally provocative phrase ‘it’s not macho just to demand more

money’.²⁸ Prudent policy maybe, but bad diplomacy. It was seen as a direct snub to Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, who had been ‘waging a relentless political campaign’ to increase defence funding, not a man who any savvy aspirant for the top office would want to antagonize.²⁹ Her words managed to annoy ministers at large too, including Gove, Javid and Hunt. Not smart, but part of her seemed positively to rejoice in aggravating colleagues.³⁰

When May’s enfeebled premiership spluttered to an end in July 2019, Truss flirted with the idea of standing in the leadership contest. When she was told that it would go nowhere, however, she threw in her lot with Johnson, only to be livid when, rather than being issued with one of the great offices of state, she was appointed International Trade Secretary. Partly out of guilt, partly to shut her up, Johnson added an extra portfolio of Minister for Women and Equalities on Amber Rudd’s resignation in September 2019. It was at Trade that she forged a significant bond with her permanent secretary Antonia Romeo.

Truss threw herself into her new portfolio, bursting to prove her Brexit credentials in a party in which the cause was riding high. No one minister in the government was doing more to exploit Brexit opportunities, pressing free-trade negotiations way beyond what fellow ministers thought possible or desirable, irritating Environment and Rural Affairs Secretary George Eustice, Gove and Sunak in the process. Midway through her time in the department, her team began to notice a subtle shift in her mindset. ‘Always a politician who could read things a long way ahead, she started to become more ideological after a year, and rather than judging everything on evidence, she increasingly approached new issues with preconceived views,’ said one.

Jet-setting Liz criss-crossed the world with trips to the United States, New Zealand, Australia and Japan in search of new trade deals. She could not be faulted for industry in post, though her dreams of a US trade deal did not transpire. Still, her unguarded comments on these trips aroused the attention of No. 10, with her nemesis Cummings furious at her verbal incontinence, her preening and her chaotic *modus operandi*. His departure

in the autumn of 2020 helped save her ministerial career. Even though Johnson remained unimpressed with her performance, and scornful of her personally, it didn't stop him making her Foreign Secretary in September 2021 when Dominic Raab was removed after holidaying during the botched Western departure from Afghanistan. She would either implode or explode, he thought.

Johnson's intention was to remove from domestic politics a bumptious rival whom he found increasingly irritating. But if he thought he was burying her, he was quickly disabused because she showed far more aplomb in post than anyone had anticipated. Indeed, her Foreign Secretaryship gives pause to those who would dismiss her as a lightweight, incapable of making a success of high office. At her best, she could be impressive, as shown in her uncompromising stance on Xi's China, her pressing at the UN for the release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe from custody in Iran (which eventually transpired in March 2022) and her launching what would become the Windsor Framework for Northern Ireland. The process was concluded in March 2023, but was built on her Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, which eased customs checks on goods from Great Britain. She recognized early on that the key to finding a way through was enlisting the support of EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and negotiating directly with her.

Truss certainly made her mark as Foreign Secretary, not least in her forceful stance on Ukraine. Before the Russian invasion in February 2022, she pressed successfully for the release of Western intelligence on Russia's military plans, and she travelled to Moscow to talk to Foreign Affairs Minister Lavrov. She strongly pushed for Ukraine to be supplied with NLAW anti-tank missiles (weapons that would prove their worth on the battlefield). After the invasion she lobbied hard for the G7 to place unforgiving sanctions on Russia, and for them only to be lifted in the event of a total Russian withdrawal. In Britain, she helped to force through very swift legislative changes that created sweeping sanctions against Russia (including the sanctioning of individuals based on US, EU and Canadian sanctions – a process called 'mirroring'). The credibility she gained on the

international stage, even with PM Johnson and Defence Secretary Wallace in the same lane, won her new admirers at home and abroad.

Her diplomatic success owed much to her willingness to listen to civil servants, despite the fact that she came to despise the collective civil service on ideological and temperamental grounds. Chief among them were Nick Catsaras, her principal private secretary at the Foreign Office whom she persuaded to come to No. 10 with her, Political Director Tim Barrow whom she elevated to National Security Adviser once she was PM, and Permanent Under-Secretary Philip Barton whom she left in post to work with whoever she appointed as Foreign Secretary. ‘Find me reasons to contest official advice’, had been a regular Truss mantra in her journey up the ministerial ladder. It suited her. Once in Downing Street would she still be able to trust civil servants who proffered good advice on topics about which she knew little, as she had done at the Foreign Office?

Truss might have shaped up to be one of the better Conservative Foreign Secretaries of recent years. But with only ten months in office, her stay was too short to assess properly. It had been sufficient, though, to add another component to the Truss agenda: international crusader for liberty. ‘The free world has taken its eye off the ball,’ she declared in a landmark speech at the foreign policy institute Chatham House in December 2021 called ‘Building the Network of Liberty’. The West, she said, had lulled itself into complacency because of ‘strategic drift. Defence spending fell. Countries became strategically dependent on cheap gas or reliant on others [i.e. China] for vital technology like 5G.’ In its place, Truss proposed a ‘network of liberty [to] advance the frontiers of freedom’ with all ‘freedom-loving nations’ abandoning ‘protectionism and isolationism’ and building ‘security links’ in common cause.³¹ ‘This new view of the world was very Manichean,’ said Adam Jones. ‘Countries were either good or evil, for or against us, pro-freedom or enemies.’³² Her ‘network of liberty’ strategic framing was all about trying to bring ‘contested countries’ into the orbit of the West, rather than let them drift towards Russia, China or Iran. In aspiration, if not vaulting language, it echoed President John F. Kennedy’s

celebrated inaugural speech in January 1961, about the need to ‘meet any hardship’ to ensure ‘the success of liberty’.

It echoed too, intentionally, the world view of her hero Margaret Thatcher. It was on a visit to Estonia in 2021 that she was photographed in a tank, in conscious mimicry and homage to Thatcher’s iconic photograph from 1986 taken in another state, West Germany, close to the frontline of the Soviet Union.

Policy Beliefs

Unlike many incoming Prime Ministers, Truss had the significant advantage of a worked-through ideological underpinning. She was going to be pro-Brexit, pro-global free trade, pro-liberty and capital, and pro-Britain being a major force in the world. She knew, and the world knew, what she stood for.

Truss’s world view had four key planks.

Her Atlanticist foreign policy was her first. To an extent that was to irk Washington, she placed a close relationship with the United States at the heart of her overseas vision. She looked back to the strong relationships between Thatcher and Reagan, Major and George H. W. Bush, and Blair with both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. The question was left in the air whether President Biden’s vision of the United States’ relationship with the United Kingdom and the world at large would be the same. To Truss, Britain should be a moral exemplar. Unlike the divisive insurgency wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, the forthright response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine offered the promise of a new era of transatlantic cooperation and Western unity, even if much of the optimism about the future of the Ukraine conflict turned out to have been misplaced.

Thatcher inspired the second plank. Truss’s tax-cutting, public-spending reductions and state-shrinking outlook owed much to her understanding of Thatcher. But it was the man who was US President at the time of her political awakening, Ronald Reagan, who had more direct influence on her policies. At Mansion House in a speech in 2019, she paid tribute to him: ‘President Reagan was clear that in order to defend freedom you cannot

afford to stay silent.’³³ During the leadership campaign on 15 August, Reagan’s celebrated speechwriter Peggy Noonan came to see Truss in Lord North Street. ‘Don’t be distracted by detail, bureaucracy or the news cycle. Go for the big picture,’ Noonan counselled her. ‘I’m not interested in having a small vision,’ Truss replied, enthralled at having this living link to her idol talking to her in her own office.³⁴ ‘She and her economic advisers were absolute followers of Ronald Reagan,’ said Kwarteng. ‘They really did believe that if you cut tax, it would lead directly to a supply-side revolution and growth.’³⁵ The question was whether this economic philosophy would deliver the expected benefits as quickly as she hoped.

Thatcher’s influence on Truss transcended the mere ideological. She told Philip Hammond that ‘if you are a woman in British politics, you have to be ruthlessly single-minded or you’ll get nothing done. That is the lesson I learned from Margaret Thatcher.’³⁶ It may not have been the best lesson. To Hammond, who worked with her for two years at the Treasury, she believed that she had to set her own agenda and wouldn’t deviate from it, because if she bent, ‘it would be seen as displaying weakness and [she] would be finished’.

Her reading of Thatcher was partial, as Thatcher’s biographer Charles Moore observed: ‘Mrs Thatcher would work intensely hard to ensure she grasped every aspect of her brief and had a strong sense of context and history. She was then very good at explaining what she was trying to do. I’m not certain Liz Truss had those same qualities.’³⁷ Truss alighted in particular on the Thatcher trait of announcing at the beginning of a meeting what she thought. ‘Liz would say “I think XYZ” and then wouldn’t listen. But Thatcher did listen, and had the confidence to absorb contrary viewpoints,’ observed Hammond.³⁸

Truss didn’t fret over her interpretation of Thatcher. If she travelled Thatcher-lite, so be it. She was not the only one to claim the Thatcher mantle in a Conservative Party that had so lost its common sense of mission that Thatcher idolatry was almost the only shared belief. ‘Sunak and Truss have declared themselves Thatcherites. For Sunak, that means adhering to fiscal conservatism to tackle inflation; for Truss, it means cutting taxes to

go for growth. Each claims that their Thatcherism is the true Thatcherism,’ as journalist Tom McTague crisply put it.³⁹

The third plank was libertarianism, which owed much to the ideas emanating from the international Mont Pelerin Society founded in 1947, with Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman as its two great luminaries, and the Institute of Economic Affairs founded in 1955 its champion in the UK.⁴⁰ Under Mark Littlewood’s leadership, the IEA continued its move away from the academic scholarship that characterized its early years and became close to a certain breed of right-wing politician, promoting specific causes such as Brexit, climate change scepticism and opposition to ‘the nanny state’.

Truss was instinctively libertarian, disliking attempts by the government to rule on ‘private matters’ such as smoking, drinking and sexual mores.

Singapore-on-Thames characterized Truss’s low tax, low regulation vision for Global Britain, unshackled from meddling from Brussels, though she didn’t use that term herself. It differed from the vision of Brexit Britain favoured by Nigel Farage, the Leave campaign and some of the tribal figures who were by then closing in on her. Their Brexit was nationalistic and isolationist, with immigration cuts at the heart. Singapore-on-Thames in contrast was an internationalist vision: after all, 40 per cent of Singapore’s population are foreigners, with the state benefiting from high levels of immigration. Truss was not an all-out ‘little Englander’ and her liberal views on immigration would, in time, cause conflict within her own government.

Her core team was never ideologically at one. Free-marketeer Ruth Porter had worked at the IEA, and libertarian Sophie Jarvis at sister think tank the Adam Smith Institute. But Truss called her policy aide Jamie Hope a ‘political mercenary’ for his pragmatism and referred to Adam Jones as a ‘centrist dad.’⁴¹ As the prospect of No. 10 came into view, a new cast of liberal thinkers arrived, and came to influence, if not her instincts, then the confidence with which she articulated them. ‘My views were pretty much formed already, and on the campaign trail, I found I needed to be not only

the front room public figure but also the back room person producing the ideas,’ she recalled.⁴²

Matthew Elliott, chief executive of Vote Leave and founder of the TaxPayers’ Alliance, started to be seen much more frequently from July 2022. So did fellow Brexiteer and venture capitalist Jon Moynihan, who ‘was always pushing the anti-green agenda on Liz’, according to an aide, who added, ‘She wanted his money for the campaign, but not his views on the environment.’ She gave him a peerage in her resignation honours list, along with Elliott and Porter. Matt Sinclair, who had run the TaxPayers’ Alliance, came in mid-campaign ‘out of a blue sky’ as her chief economic adviser, on Elliott’s advice. This disconcerted her team, who complained that ‘the boss didn’t know him’ and, more importantly, ‘he never understood Liz’. From the same political stable were two politicians, both fervent free-marketeers and Brexiteers, Thatcher’s former head of policy and Cabinet minister John Redwood and Jacob Rees-Mogg. While Nadine Dorries’ involvement waned after their Downing Street declarations for Truss, Rees-Mogg was to wax into a constant and insistent voice in her ear.

The fourth and final plank had always been present in her mind. This was a sense of anti-establishmentism and a suspicion of the ‘blob’, the combined forces of the establishment and ‘deep state’ that she and others like her saw as obstructive towards bold inclinations and liberal policy. Into this group Truss placed not just the civil service, but also the Treasury, with its orthodox, anti-growth mindset, and the Bank of England, the Office for Budget Responsibility and the International Monetary Fund. ‘She always thought the establishment was there to resist what practical politicians like herself were trying to do,’ said one adviser.

Figures like Elliot, Littlewood, Moynihan, Redwood, Rees-Mogg, Clarke and Kwarteng shared a secret understanding: that Truss’s grasp of the subtleties of market economics, while deeply held, was superficial, and they were there to stiffen her resolve when she found herself up against the agents of the ‘deep state’. They were there to keep her honest and straight: ‘We can expect to see a whirlwind of activity and announcements from the very first minutes of her entering Downing Street... The overall direction of

travel in the Truss administration will be crystal clear – to move power and money away from the state bureaucracy and into the hands of ordinary men and women,’ wrote Littlewood just hours before she became Prime Minister. They were her minders, a secret cabal to protect her from the forces of darkness, the secret state.⁴³ She of course contests this, and believes her suspicions about institutions had been long acquired in office. Maybe, her Praetorian Guard might say, but look at how she crumbled when she came up against the forces of the ‘deep state’ once in power.

Four Weeks to Power: 8 August–5 September 2022

Truss was nervous throughout the campaign, initially doubting whether she could win, then doubting whether she was really up to being Prime Minister. At a staff meeting on Friday 29 July, she was tetchy. When it was suggested that she needed to think more about Downing Street, she snapped, ‘Look, I’ve not won anything yet. I’m going to keep my focus on the campaign. Get on with your jobs.’ But then everything changed.

In early August, Mark Fullbrook suddenly announced, ‘This is the endpoint of the campaign. There is very little that we can do now. Most members have made up their minds and voted.’ An aide recalls Fullbrook telling Truss, ‘I don’t want you out on the stump any more, Liz. You need to be switching to the transition process and working out what you will do for the country.’ She paused but then accepted the verdict.

The family atmosphere among Truss’s team that had endured from the moment she had returned from Bali now began to break up. Realizing they were standing on the precipice of power, her team became locked into a bitter struggle for the possession of her soul. On the one side, her young team who had bonded together during her time at International Trade and the Foreign Office, focused around Jones, Hope and Jarvis. With the exception of the last, who was like a daughter to Truss and shared her anti-China zeal, they were more pragmatic and centrist than she was. On the other side were the joint campaign directors Fullbrook and Porter who claimed seniority and Truss’s own preferment, and who had a closer affinity

with her vision to recast the self-serving British establishment. To Jones et al., Truss was selling out by throwing in her lot with Porter and Fullbrook, and the people they brought in like Sinclair. ‘She said that we were not sufficiently on mission, nor experienced enough, nor true believers. So we were sidelined,’ said one. ‘But we were the people who challenged her, and the others did not. We knew how to get the best out of her,’ explained another.

Not aligned to either camp stood communications specialist Jason Stein, who, apart from Porter, had been with Truss the longest. An ingenious loner, he had been behind many of the initiatives that had made Truss into a national figure, and possessed a grip over her that none other could match. ‘It was a Rasputin-like hold. He would pump her up, dance with her, get inside her mind, and he gave her a confidence no one else could before the big media occasions,’ said one aide.

Without Stein, she would not have emerged as the prominent figure that she was. But could she go on any further with him? To some, he was divisive and resented others coming into his space and claiming her attention, above all with the big prize coming into sight. His animosity focused on Fullbrook. Matters came to a head on Friday 12 August. Travelling in the back of the car with her, he was furious when he heard that she had decided to keep Fullbrook on as chief of staff if she became Prime Minister. ‘He’s no good as campaign manager, a con man, and he’ll probably end your premiership,’ he blurted out. ‘Thank you, Jason. I’ve made my decision,’ she said before getting out of the car. Stein was left behind to ponder. ‘Wow. You’re a brave kid,’ said the security policeman in the car with them. ‘I’ve done this job for a long time and I’ve never heard anyone speak to a Secretary of State like that.’ Later that day, Truss sidled up to him, saying, ‘I want you to know, Jason, that I like you a lot. But I am very angry with you. I’m not going to let go of Mark. We’re going to have to sort this out.’ She then gave him a long hug and left.⁴⁴

That night the leadership circus moved on to Manchester. Fullbrook sought out Stein and tried to smooth things over. ‘I know you can’t stand me, but let’s make a deal for the sake of Liz. I won’t mess you about if you

don't mess me about.' Fullbrook was not reassured by his response. 'Mark saw Jason as a political terrorist, a mini-Cummings whose method was to belittle and undermine others; definitely not a team player,' said an aide. The next morning at breakfast, Truss told Stein, 'I've got serious concerns about you coming into Downing Street, Jason, and that you won't be able to work with Mark.' For the time being, the difference was patched up. But it did not augur well for when she became Prime Minister.

Truss had been in turmoil about who she'd place at the heart of her premiership. Like Boris Johnson, she loved mystery and to have conflicting circles of advisers. Originally, Truss set her heart on David Frost having a big role beside her. A former Foreign Office diplomat who became Johnson's chief negotiator during the Brexit negotiations, he resigned from his Cabinet in December 2021 with ambitions to succeed Johnson himself. Frost was revered on the Brexiteer wing of the party and in the right-wing television and press. Following his trashing of Mordaunt in the MPs stage of the contest, he became a commanding figure early on in Truss's campaign before overreaching himself. He wanted to be her right-hand man in No. 10 as Deputy Prime Minister (DPM). His ambition caused consternation among the team, and he shortly after disappeared. Truss had already earmarked her closest parliamentary ally Coffey as DPM, and fell back on Fullbrook as chief of staff. Campaigning was Fullbrook's strength, while Porter was to emerge for a time as Truss's key figure over policy. Stein saw himself left out in the cold. This situation was exacerbated by Truss changing her phone number for security reasons partway through the campaign, because it was suspected of being hacked by the Russian security services.⁴⁵ Though utterly unavoidable, it cut her off yet further from her stalwarts, who complained they could no longer get hold of her. A subsequent change of phone was deemed necessary, and thereafter access to her was only through Fullbrook and Porter. Realizing he would never get anywhere with Fullbrook, and fearing that Porter was forming 'an unholy alliance with him', he turned to the latter. 'You should quit now,' Stein told Porter. 'I can't quit. I've worked my whole life for this,' she told him.⁴⁶

Porter set to work at once to ensure that Truss was meeting the right people. Over the weekend of 6–7 August, a select group of economists was invited to her home in Greenwich. ‘You should hear from these free-market people,’ Truss was told by Sinclair, one of the figures behind the meeting. ‘Our understanding is that it was devised as an egg-on for Liz, to stiffen her resolve,’ said Shabbir Merali, her economic adviser. Littlewood and fellow economist Julian Jessop were present at the tutorial, as was Rees-Mogg, hoping to be her Chancellor. Did she need this turbocharging? Even some of her most ardent ideological supporters had reservations: ‘Their radicalism gave fresh tinder to something that was already burning too brightly within Liz,’ said Simon Clarke.⁴⁷ The ideas flew around the room. A few days later, the idea of scrapping the cap on bankers’ bonuses was mentioned. ‘Let’s go for it!’ Reducing the 45p tax rate? ‘Long overdue.’ ‘How about replacing all direct taxes with a flat 20p rate of income tax?’ ‘Great idea, Jacob.’ This last proposal was nicknamed ‘Estonia’ (a reference to a similar policy adopted there) and Rees-Mogg ‘estimated it would cost £41 billion’. ‘I’d long been attracted to the idea of flat rate taxes,’ Truss said later.⁴⁸

‘These ideas might have been fine if it had been a blue skies airing of a hundred things that we might do together at some point. But these guys were deadly serious,’ recalled one adviser. He watched with horror as those present vied with each other to produce the most radical and outlandish ideas, none more so than Rees-Mogg. ‘What is the number one problem with the UK energy system?’ he asked. Silence. ‘Not enough nuclear power,’ he said, answering his own question. ‘We need more small reactors in the UK.’ ‘How would you do it?’ one asked. ‘We should get a nuclear submarine to dock at Liverpool and plug it into the grid. That would show people it was safe.’ Shock. Simon Case quietly interjected, ‘I fear that’s a non-starter: the submarines are needed on operations.’ ‘No one even laughed. It was totally pie in the sky. I thought they should’ve been blowing up these ideas rather than legitimizing them,’ said another present. After they left, her young aides rounded on her: ‘Liz, this is totally mad. You’re not really serious about these ideas, are you?’ ‘I was worried,’ Kwarteng

later said. ‘Liz was losing her perspective. She was beating Rishi Sunak, vanquishing establishment sceptics William Hague, Michael Howard and *The Times*. And she thought she had done it by talking about the folly of “abacus economics” [a term for ‘Treasury orthodoxy’, or the Treasury’s obsession with balancing the books, in contrast to more ambitious deficit spending]. She believed she had a mandate and was now going to go for it.’

At this point, mid-August, another group came into her orbit. ‘Let me know how we can help you think about the transition’, was the message sent to both candidates by Simon Case, Cabinet Secretary and head of the civil service, soon after Truss and Sunak were declared winners of the MPs stage on 20 July. Truss had mixed thoughts on reading it. She hadn’t formed a high opinion of Case during the Johnson years and ‘thought he was a creature of Dominic Cummings’, Johnson’s once powerful political strategist, an insider recalled. She had already decided with Kwarteng to sack Tom Scholar, the permanent secretary at the Treasury, and had thoughts of moving Case on too. Could the head of Whitehall, which she believed had done so much damage holding back the country, really help her, she pondered? From the outset, Case worked supremely hard to be helpful and personable: dealing with Prime Ministers (and would-be Prime Ministers) was a particular forte. ‘Within a few weeks, if not days, his skill on the transition and advice on how the Cabinet Office machinery worked ensured she quickly came to rely [on him],’ said an aide. ‘Simon was fully aware of the deep suspicion towards the civil service, and from the outset was going to lean over backwards to show she had no grounds for her concerns,’ said an insider. They quickly developed a strong personal chemistry: ‘Her dependency on him was evident: he was operating as if he was already Cabinet secretary to the Prime Minister,’ said another.

Helping Truss set up her transition team base at the Foreign Secretary’s country residence at Chevening was one of his early tricks. ‘It was absolutely awful, no catering, poor Wi-Fi and incredibly hot in the summer weather,’ said one of Truss’s team. But it was a lot better and more secluded than trying to work from offices in London with the constant presence of the media, which had decided that she was the heir apparent. So from the

week starting Monday 8 August, she set up camp at Chevening, and it was there, until the team departed on Friday 2 September, that the blueprint for her premiership was hammered out.

Down to Kent trooped the cream of the civil service, with one exception: the shortly to be defenestrated Tom Scholar. The Treasury's Cat Little, Philip Duffy and Beth Russell were the most frequent attenders. They did voice caution, but Truss was not taking the criticisms on board. 'You can't do it all now,' the officials said to her. 'But what she heard them say was "you can't do it *at all*", which was not what they were saying,' recalled one present.

Fully mindful of the public comments Truss had made about her dislike of the Treasury and its views, the civil servants trod carefully. 'To a man and woman, they were eager to show that they were on side and ready to deliver whatever she wanted,' said one present. 'It was a bit strange for them, giving advice to the Foreign Secretary and not to the Chancellor Rishi Sunak, even if the Cabinet secretary had authorized it. They were building relationships, demonstrating technical competence and showing they could be impartial,' said a Treasury official. 'At the end of the meetings, I could see their faces were in shock. Kwasi seemed to share the horror, but then fell in with it,' said one observer, charged with overseeing liaison with the civil service. The talks had been initiated by Truss's team because they knew they were winning; no such process took place for Sunak's team, who realized it would be a wasted effort.

At the conclusion of one meeting, towards the end of August, Hope passed a note to a senior Cabinet Office official: 'No way you can do this politically. It would mean not hitting the 20k increase to the police force, massive real terms cuts to the NHS, breaking the "triple lock" on pensions, not delivering on the AUKUS pact [trilateral security agreement with the USA and Australia], schools falling in, the Defence Secretary and Home Secretary resigning.' For good measure, he added, 'It's f**king mental.' 'I agree,' the official wrote covertly back to him.

Those who had concerns, however, kept them to themselves, and few even asked probing questions in the meetings. Participants at Chevening

were either too afraid of censure and ridicule, or high on the sugar rush of seeing ideas long advocated now rising to the top. Consequently, the conversations became circular and the atmosphere one of self-reinforcing groupthink.

Tax cuts were going to be at the core of Project Truss, as promised in the campaign. The economic and political climate would allow nothing else. But were the conditions still right for speedy and radical change? High spending during the Covid pandemic meant gross government debt in September 2022 had risen to an alarming 100.2 per cent of GDP, while productivity growth and business investment were sluggish.⁴⁹ On top of all this, the cost of living crisis was beginning to make itself felt, with the price of fuel rising by 40 per cent in August 2022. In his Budget back in March, Sunak had raised income tax, National Insurance contributions and corporation tax, resulting in ‘the biggest overall UK tax burden since the 1960s’.⁵⁰ Tax cuts dominated the leadership campaign, with even Sunak saying that he would cut the basic rate of income tax by the end of the next Parliament. The principal Budget questions for Truss’s team thus were: where should the tax cuts fall, how would they be balanced by spending cuts, and how could the confidence of the markets be maintained?

The politicians who came down to the meetings at Chevening, many eager for top positions in the Treasury, jockeyed for Truss’s ear and for who could be the most radical. One of the hot plugs suggested that the government should remove all barriers to rich Russians coming to London to boost the economy. Rees-Mogg advocated abolishing inheritance tax and removing tax relief on civil servants working from home, a proposal that gained traction until it was pulled late in the day.⁵¹ His angling to be Chancellor never stood a hope. She had settled on Kwarteng, who may have been less of a true believer, but whom she trusted after years of friendship. She thought, correctly, that he would be easier to push around than any one of the other opinionated tall men. Rees-Mogg’s influence was to wane during August: she was told either he or his team were leaking when some of his more extreme ideas failed to gain traction, and he was excluded from some late meetings. She was fond of Simon Clarke, who pressed strongly

for ‘investment zones’, which chimed with her. John Redwood was a figure early on at Chevening until he made it clear that he didn’t want to become a minister for personal financial reasons, so was replaced by Chris Philp, who was to succeed Clarke as Chief Secretary to the Treasury in September.

Truss’s chief economic adviser Matt Sinclair represented the views of economists Mark Littlewood, Julian Jessop and Gerard Lyons at the meetings. Equally, he was the voice of Matthew Elliott and Jon Moynihan who were not physically present, but whose influence was never far away, the former on operational matters and the latter on ideology and structures. Sinclair pressed hard on freezing alcohol and stamp duties, and reducing income tax, and observers felt he might have had a role in radicalizing Kwarteng, but he never won Truss’s full confidence. As she kept reminding them, she needed no one telling her what she should do. She had made up her own mind and didn’t need to be told to be radical. ‘Her inner conviction was always telling her let’s go further, further, further. It all came from her,’ said one present. ‘It was all Liz. She had a very clear programme in her mind from day one. We had to deliver. No excuses,’ recalled Clarke.

Time pressed down on Truss. Every day that passed was bringing her closer to Downing Street, but she didn’t feel her agenda was anything like ready. ‘She had a manic restless energy all the time. “We have only two years left in this Parliament. We have to act now. Now! We have to be bold!”’, was her constant refrain, according to a political ally who was there. But unlike Gordon Brown taking over in similar circumstances, she never contemplated a snap election to gain a personal mandate, as she knew she’d be trounced. ‘She wanted to have the very maximum time to deliver the changes she thought the country needed,’ Fullbrook said. Some speculated if the haste stemmed in part from a deep inner anxiety, a doubt whether she really had it in her to be Prime Minister. ‘She felt she had to make her mark early on to prove to herself that she really could do it,’ said one. An official who worked closely with her concurs. ‘Her strategy was to go really hard to get as much done as she possibly could, and then hunker down. She knew she had a highly divided party and no personal mandate. She wanted to do it all before her political capital dwindled altogether.’

She knew that the state of the Conservative Party was precarious. Johnson's great election victory in 2019 had united them under the slogan 'Get Brexit Done'. But beyond that single issue, the manifesto was thin. He had delivered little on the nebulous concept of 'Levelling Up' and there was no chance of an 'Australian-style points system' for immigration.⁵² Failure exacerbated division and blame. The party was also still nursing deep wounds since the 2016 referendum, divided on their views of Europe, on immigration, and between the 'One Nation' tradition Tories and the more free market-inclined MPs. 'It was impossible to manage. There was no clear sense of what the party wanted to do any longer. I basically thought that the best way to handle it was just to get on and do things', she said.⁵³

Mid-August was when Truss fatefully decided that the financial measures, including tax cuts, announced within days of her becoming Prime Minister would not include spending cuts to balance them. Cuts would be announced later in the autumn, as part of the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan. 'When it came to finding cuts in spending to offset the tax reductions, she really wasn't interested in doing the easy thing. She seemed to enjoy the risk of it all, the bravado,' said one witness.

The Circle Narrows

Truss was continuing to change inwardly, according to those who had known her for several years, becoming tetchier, more distrustful and imperious. Never comfortable with challenge, she was now even more intolerant and suspicious of those who queried her judgement. An illustration of this came when the possibility of Suella Braverman as Home Secretary arose in conversation. 'Surely not!' said one of her team, bursting out laughing. Truss marched the aide out into the garden. 'It's not your place to offer advice on who I'm going to have in my Cabinet. You're lucky to be on the team. Stay in your lane,' she shouted. People noticed that her trait of humiliating her team in front of others became more pronounced. 'She couldn't abide any contention. It was either all in with her, or all out. A very peculiar personality type,' said an aide.

As the days passed, she grew ready to embrace radicalism. Her three core initial priorities – reverse the corporation tax rise, pause the green tax on energy and cancel the rise in National Insurance contributions – no longer sufficed. For a few days, she became fixated on the bankers' bonus issue. 'Yes, it may be fiscally neutral, but it is still careless politics,' Jones warned her. This provoked some healthy, if forthright, disagreement.

'On Sunday 14 August we were suddenly told to down tools; [that] there will be no further meetings on transition with us, no more work for now,' recalled Ranil Jayawardena, the MP Truss had charged with directing the transition.⁵⁴ It was no longer just aides being shown the door; ministerial big-hitters like Clarke and Philp were too. Their sin? Arguing that tax cuts had to be at least partially offset by cuts in spending. 'Whenever we mentioned it, Liz was manic – "no, no, no" – and made it very clear to us it was not something she was going to do,' said one present. 'There were a number of possible options worked up, but these were not taken forwards,' said Chris Philp. 'I think that if the tax plans had at least been partly funded on the spending side as I argued, then the reaction of the financial markets would have been different.'⁵⁵

They were not the only people talking about it; Kwarteng had been equally concerned. Truss was absolutely clear she wasn't going to include savings. 'I've been Chief Secretary to the Treasury. It's a whole world of pain if you talk about cuts, especially in a campaign. Let's just go for it,' she told him. 'But why are we trying to do it all now? We have a Budget in the spring,' he asked her in private at Chevening. She rounded on him. 'Look, we've only got two years.' Taking his political life into his own hands, he reminded her that Thatcher had bided her time for two years until 1981 before her defining Budget. 'At that, Liz freaked out,' he said. So he tempered his line, knowing the case he was putting forward enraged her. Did he wonder whether her promise of the Chancellorship might be jeopardized if he persisted? 'I should've put my foot down harder,' he admitted later.⁵⁶

Gerard Lyons, the economist who had been advising Mordaunt till she was knocked out, had mixed feelings about Truss, but in a call with her

mid-August, he gave similar warnings. He endorsed reversing the corporation tax and National Insurance increases, telling her, 'Reversing them is necessary to prevent the economy falling into the recession that many economists are predicting.' But he expressed the need for great caution if the larger prize of freeing up the economy was not to be put at risk. Then at pivotal meetings at Chevening on Monday 29 August and Saturday 3 September, he went into more detail. At that 3 September meeting, Truss, flanked by Kwarteng and Sinclair, met with Lyons and economists Julian Jessop and Andrew Lilico. The economists were supportive of her growth agenda, but in a note Lyons and Jessop submitted beforehand that was leaked to the *Guardian* and the *Financial Times*, they warned that 'the markets are in a febrile state... very wary of your interventions – you must tread very carefully. If immediate economic policy announcements are handled badly, then a market crash is possible.'⁵⁷ They expanded on their concerns at the meeting: the pound had weakened, foreign holdings of gilts and UK equities were high, expectations were low. The need for keeping the markets on side was paramount. At the meetings, the economists thought that Truss asked the most pertinent questions and seemed most on top of the material, but they worried about her overconfidence.⁵⁸ This was not the 'blob' talking to them, but blue-blooded economists. The warning, on the cusp of Downing Street, could not have been clearer.

They were alarmed that she might spoil the best opportunity to enact free-market policies for many years by bad delivery. In a note that Lyons sent to Kwarteng at the end of August, he warned, 'You need someone to mark your homework.' Specifically, this meant having the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), set up by Chancellor George Osborne in 2010, commenting on the financial measures. Lyons knew that the OBR epitomized everything that Truss and Kwarteng deplored about the establishment, but believed the volatile state of the markets made its involvement inevitable.

In Truss's view, the OBR, the Treasury and the Bank of England formed 'an axis of evil'. During the campaign, she had been open about her

criticism of the Bank and its Governor, Andrew Bailey, for not doing more to tackle inflation. Menacing threats about how she would curtail the Bank and even change its mandate peaked in early August. Jon Moynihan was the most vocal of her ear-whisperers in this quest. ‘Everyone in the City is telling me to sack the Governor,’ she told one startled economist in August who was surprised the prime ministerial candidate did not seem to know she wouldn’t have the power to do this. It was left to Labour’s shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves to point out the obvious: it was ‘deeply irresponsible’ for her to threaten to change the Bank’s mandate and attack the Governor on the brink of a recession, which ‘creates huge uncertainty that will hold back vital investment’.⁵⁹ The tone changed in mid-August. Truss and Kwarteng realized that talking about changes to the Bank’s mandate was not good for the distressed pound, and they ‘should be hugging the Bank of England closely instead’, as one of the Bank’s senior leaders put it. Kwarteng would duly announce on his first day as Chancellor his ‘full support for the independent Bank of England’.⁶⁰ Bank-bashing in public was off the table, but they doubled down on criticizing the OBR and Treasury orthodoxy. Moynihan was the ‘captain or chief of the institution-bashers’, with Elliott, Rees-Mogg, Philp, Littlewood and Sinclair key players in the team. Kwarteng was ‘on the bench’, according to one aide. This description misses the point: the team captain was always Truss herself. The opposition to Truss orthodoxy never stood a chance.

‘The final two weeks of August were pivotal,’ recalled Clarke. ‘With an unassailable polling lead and most votes already safely cast by party members, Liz settled in at Chevening for a blizzard of meetings. Here her distaste for “abacus economics”, always present, won over caution,’ he concluded.⁶¹ ‘Spending cuts are not something I am going to do in the fiscal event,’ she told her team, referring to what would become the Mini-Budget announced on 23 September. She hadn’t listened to the economists, but maybe she would listen to her ministerial backers. They joined together and sent her a note on 30 August summarizing the tax and spending cut options, which included the idea of uncoupling increases in welfare benefits from inflation from April 2023. ‘[We] need to maintain the confidence of the

bond markets in our fiscal plans or we will find ourselves paying higher interest rates on new gilt issues... In order to navigate the choices available, we need to have some kind of medium-term fiscal rules within which to operate to maintain the confidence of the bond markets,' it said.

'Drop these ideas. We are not interested in running with them,' Sinclair told one adviser over the phone. In case they hadn't got the message, Truss underlined it for them herself. 'We don't need to talk about all this,' she told them when they persisted that cuts must appear as part of the planned fiscal event. When the fiscal measures went disastrously wrong, there was a rush to rewrite history, hence these quotations from contemporary documents.

Energy Price Angst

By this point Truss could not avoid talking about the astronomic rise in fuel prices and the cost of living crisis. Initially, she was not inclined to subsidize energy bills. Then, abruptly, she changed her mind. What had happened? Why did she change her mind on energy support but display total rigidity on plans for the fiscal event that was so perturbing some of her team?

'Liz was very concerned in July and early August about the costs of any energy intervention, and Rishi coming after her for fiscal irresponsibility,' said one of them. But the August forecasts of a massive energy price spike in the year ahead changed her tune. 'She felt she had to do something because she wouldn't survive, she thought that no Prime Minister would, if everything went south. She changed from being very hawkish about reducing state spending to spending a lot of money to fix this,' said Alex Boyd, who had advised Truss in International Trade and the Foreign Office and was now working for her on energy.⁶²

News that she was looking for some form of intervention had an unintended consequence. 'It created great interest in the markets,' said one of the Bank of England's senior leaders. 'Once it became clear Sunak wouldn't win, the markets became very volatile. Everything hinged on what an energy support package might mean. If handouts and rebates, inflation

would increase; if a cap, it would be counter-inflationary.’ Throughout August, the Bank’s Monetary Policy Committee monitored her thinking and every utterance forensically. ‘She was being very coy about it, and it led to questions about whether she really had a plan,’ he added.

But what to do? Simon Case, drawing on his experience of crisis management when working in No. 10 and the Cabinet Office, stepped in and became a decisive figure. ‘He was very conscious of the risks and dangers, and was working on them closely with Kwasi,’ said one of Truss’s team. On 4 August, Case convened a meeting in 70 Whitehall, the home of the Cabinet Office, on the challenges in the energy market following the invasion of Ukraine, the ensuing sanctions cutting gas supplies, and the hot European summer putting pressure on hydroelectric power and nuclear reactors that were running short of cooling water.⁶³ Various solutions were debated then and in the following days including delinking gas and electricity prices. The free-marketeers argued that no intervention remained the best option and they became increasingly irritated by the time and energy Truss and Kwarteng were putting into the issue rather than into the economic proposals.

During the dry August days, hours were eaten up as her team listened to presentations from officials with charts showing the likely impact of price increases. ‘At its worst, pubs, shops and independent traders would have to cease trading – hugely sobering,’ said one aide. Truss settled on a price cap, Case’s favoured option, with the government paying the difference. The resistance she encountered from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in particular confirmed all her prejudices about the civil service. ‘She bulldozed her way through huge internal lethargy: we would never have had it in place without her personal bloody-mindedness,’ said one observer. Much of the heavy lifting was done by official Madelaine McTernan, latterly director general of the Vaccine Taskforce, whom Case drafted in to drive the work. Ofgem’s confirmation on 26 August that bills would rise to more than £3,500 a year injected further adrenaline into the system.⁶⁴ Predictions that the average household bill would jump to £6,000 a year, driving inflation to 15 per cent, created further anxiety.⁶⁵

Truss was under pressure from two quarters: Littlewood, the economist who preferred to do nothing or to have minimal intervention, and Jones and Hope pressing her to go as far as fiscally possible. She rejected the Labour solution of a windfall tax or means testing. She knew that there could be no new taxes and accepted the argument that generous help would get the country through and would not be nearly as expensive as the naysayers predicted. The unpredictability of the forward curve on energy prices caused much anguish when it came to settling on what the level of support should be: officials suggested somewhere between £2,000 and £3,000, and she decided to split the difference, rejecting advice from the Treasury that it should last for six months only. ‘I want to give people some security and not have them worrying about the future. It will last two years,’ she declared to one adviser. With the leadership contest still in full flow, she was reluctant to come out about the energy price cap in public, concealing it in an interview with George Parker of the *Financial Times*.⁶⁶ ‘She felt at the time she had to conceal what she was about to reveal if she became PM, but felt that the markets would be able to absorb the cost of the package,’ an aide recalled.

Truss was in her element, pushing for long-term contracts with the major gas suppliers – the Qataris, Norwegians and Americans. Discussions that opened at Chevening continued into No. 10 before petering out. But the Energy Price Guarantee, announced by Truss to the House of Commons on Thursday 8 September, two days after becoming PM, went ahead. She announced plans to freeze energy bills at an average of £2,500 a year for two years as part of a package of support for homes and businesses.

The Verdict: Have a Clear and Realistic Plan?

How did Truss fare on this second requirement for a successful premiership? Truss’s plan for government was not fully complete when she became Prime Minister on Tuesday 6 September. She signed off the details of her Energy Price Guarantee late on the Wednesday evening before announcing it in the House of Commons the next day. But many of her

hopes – to secure long-term gas contracts and to provide long-term energy security through nuclear, fracking and onshore wind sources – were not completed and remained in planning. Freeing up onshore wind had been a particular passion, with her desire to ensure a much quicker connection to the national grid. But her ambition to balance the spending on the Energy Price Guarantee with energy reforms to make a once in a generation shift in energy supply were, like so many of her plans, to come to nothing.

Her economic agenda more generally was still incomplete when she became Prime Minister. She had wanted to see a huge supply-side injection of enterprise into the economy, with significant investment in roads and other connections to allow the economy to move faster. Planning permission would be reformed, removing ‘green’ obligations to spur building.⁶⁷ ‘Investment zones’ were a particular passion that would have a combination of low tax, tax relief and low regulation. ‘More, we want more,’ she would regularly say. When aides explained that such zones would suck economic activity from nearby areas, her response was, ‘Let’s see, press ahead.’

How to kickstart economic growth was the priority above everything else. There was little discussion of any departure from existing foreign and defence policy, and reforms in areas such as health, education and social care were barely considered. ‘I intended coming round to them towards the end of the Parliament in the run-up to the general election,’ she said.⁶⁸ Everything was swallowed up in her ambition to fire up the economy. The plan for the fiscal event was broadly in place when she moved into Downing Street. It would focus on supply-side reform, reverse the planned rises in National Insurance contributions and corporation tax, and include tax cuts still to be agreed. While some of the wilder reveries of Rees-Mogg et al. had been discarded, the decisions on the abolition of the 45p rate of income tax and the cap on bankers’ bonuses had not yet been taken. But the fateful decisions to exclude the OBR and to postpone announcing cuts in spending had.

The verdict? Truss came to power with a bold plan, a benefit many recent Prime Ministers did not have. But it was not realistic to launch it in

the way she did, or at the time she did, or with some of the content she did. She could have involved the OBR, who might have provided some much-needed scepticism. As it was, the atmosphere led to a cycle of self-reinforcing groupthink as confidence and daring led to arrogance and, ultimately, hubris. Some of those alongside her overplay the extent of their contemporary warnings. But the written evidence from the time is clear. She was explicitly warned of the risks of what she was doing. She has no one else to blame but herself.



Rule Number Three: The Prime Minister must appoint a loyal and capable team. Here at her first cabinet with Coffey and Rees-Mogg on Wednesday 7 September

3

APPOINT THE BEST CABINET/TEAM

1–7 September 2022

Truss needed to appoint the strongest and most representative Cabinet possible if she was to have any chance of negotiating the perilous waters ahead. Achieving this is the third requirement for a successful premiership. The office of Prime Minister lacks executive power: it lies in the hands of the Cabinet ministers who carry out the work of government on behalf of the PM. If the Prime Minister does not appoint, motivate and work with the best, they will underperform. ‘Prime Ministers must govern with others’, was the thesis of the supreme post-war specialist on the Cabinet, George W. Jones: ‘They depend upon the support or at least tacit compliance of their fellow ministers to achieve their goals. This cooperation is not automatic and must be won.’¹ Who better than Liz Truss to know this? She had served under Cameron, May and Johnson, and had ringside seats in each of their departures. Incredibly, she was the first Prime Minister since Eden in 1955 to serve in Cabinet under three PMs (Baldwin, Chamberlain and Churchill in Eden’s case). Did she, we may ask, learn anything from experience and history?

The Prime Minister has to be both manager of their team as well as the captain on the pitch. ‘Hero Prime Ministers’ who try to do too much themselves, like Chamberlain in the Munich Crisis or Eden during the Suez Crisis, and who become detached from their Cabinets, become unstuck. This is what happened to Blair over Iraq, or Thatcher over the poll tax at the end of her premiership. Spurned Cabinets will eventually bite the Prime Minister. Hero premiers never end well.

The PM and Cabinet in History

The modern Cabinet did not exist when Robert Walpole became the first Prime Minister in 1721. Heads of departments including the Treasury and the Southern and Northern Departments (out of which would be formed the Home Office and the Foreign Office) owed their appointment and allegiance to the monarch and discussed department business directly with them. The monarch could also seek advice from the Privy Council, which included notables such as the Lord Chancellor and the Archbishop of Canterbury, but which lacked any sense of collective responsibility.

During the eighteenth century, the sense of a decision-making Cabinet operating with the Prime Minister and responsible for its own decisions grew, though unevenly and uncertainly. In February 1746, in protest at George II's taking political advice from non-ministers, and in opposition to his unilateral appointments, Prime Minister Henry Pelham (1743–54), his senior Cabinet ministers and dozens of junior ministers resigned over the course of a few days (Pelham resumed office shortly after at the King's request). This helped to create the doctrine that the Cabinet was *collectively* responsible for the direction of policy. In 1782, the fall of Lord North saw the resignation of all his ministers too, enshrining the custom that a discredited ministry resigned entirely with the PM.² Pitt the Younger after 1783 began to utilize the Cabinet as a valuable resource, promoting a crop of talented young politicians, who would ultimately dominate British politics for decades.

Up until the twentieth century, the system of Cabinet, though increasingly underpinned by convention and tradition, retained the gentlemanly amateurism of its early days. Minutes were not taken at all, though Prime Ministers dutifully recorded Cabinet proceedings in their letters to the monarch. On occasion, Cabinet met and ministers would leave the meeting without a clear idea of what had been decided.³

David Lloyd George (1916–22) effectively created the modern premiership with his creation of the Cabinet Secretariat (which became the Cabinet Office) and the position of Cabinet secretary in December 1916, and from this point onwards, Cabinet became more organised and was underpinned by a stronger bureaucracy. From now on, Cabinet minutes

were taken, agendas circulated and proper process added to what had been, for the first 200 years of the role of Prime Minister, an unabashedly fluid system.

At the same time, the size and ambition of government expanded enormously into economic, healthcare and social policy areas. Suddenly, the Prime Minister had to be a chief executive at the head, not just of politics and Parliament, but also a burgeoning administration in Whitehall.

Clement Attlee (1945–51) set the standard. A master at appointing and sacking, he had a slew of war-blooded ministers from Churchill's Coalition government to slot into the right positions, including Ernest Bevin at the Foreign Office, Hugh Dalton at the Treasury and Herbert Morrison as Leader of the House. He was equally good at spotting fresh talent, like Nye Bevan, whom he appointed to oversee the creation of the NHS. The uncharismatic and retiring Attlee proved to be without equal at Cabinet management, holding it together through the period of the biggest domestic policy activism of the twentieth century.

Harold Wilson after 1964 was accomplished too at promoting talent, appointing Cabinet ministers of the calibre of Roy Jenkins to the Home Office, James Callaghan to the Treasury and Denis Healey to the Ministry of Defence. Wilson fell far short of Attlee, though, at managing Cabinet and spent huge political resources trying to do so often at the cost of clarity of direction.

Truss's lodestar Thatcher appointed a broad-based Cabinet in May 1979, recognizing that she was not yet politically strong enough to fill it with true believers in her free-market philosophy. She waited over two years before dismissing 'wets', including Lord Soames, Mark Carlisle and Ian Gilmour, in a reshuffle in late 1981. In their place came figures ideologically close to her, such as Nigel Lawson as Energy Secretary, Norman Tebbit as Employment Secretary and her philosophical soulmate Keith Joseph at Education. For the next seven years, until she began to lose her grip over the Cabinet, she was in command of her team.

Cabinet Selection

Did Truss spend time pondering her idol's statecraft? If she did, there is little evidence that it informed her decisions.

By 15 August, recognizing that she was going to win, she began to focus on who she would choose as her Chancellor. One arch supporter had convinced himself that he was the ideal fit. He would become the Nigel Lawson figure who, for six years after 1983 until they fell out, had been Thatcher's agenda-changing Chancellor. Jacob Rees-Mogg saw himself as heir to Lawson, his intellectual equal and as zealous a champion of the free market. He imagined Kwasi Kwarteng would continue as Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Secretary (with perhaps the title of Deputy Prime Minister to boost his esteem). He launched into his suit with the passion of Malvolio wooing Olivia. Truss's Foreign Office special advisers, playing the parts of Fabian and Feste, were horrified that she might appoint him, especially after the, to their mind, ludicrous ideas he had postulated at Chevening. 'All of us inside the tent knew Jacob could never be Chancellor: you only had to hear his flat rate tax and other mad ideas to realize his thinking was politically toxic,' said one.

Truss either did not notice or did not care what her minions thought. She had already decided that she had absolutely no intention of appointing Rees-Mogg. She wanted to be Chancellor in all but name and to receive the credit for the success of the measures, not to appoint an intellectual loudmouth with his own ideas who would play to the gallery. So she decided to sideline him, doing so in a particularly brutal way. She and Ruth Porter had established two work streams at Chevening: an economy strand and an energy support package strand. One morning in August, he arrived at Chevening and was surprised to learn an economy meeting was about to begin. Truss intercepted him. 'Jacob, this is a meeting that we didn't need you at,' she said. Those present noticed him wince. A figure of immense dignity as well as sensitivity, they noticed how subdued he was for the rest of the day as the truth sunk in that he would not be handed the prize he desperately sought.

Truss, of course, had long had her ideal candidate in mind. Kwarteng was her long-term friend and Greenwich neighbour and he shared many of

her beliefs. She knew he would ultimately always yield to her. ‘She asked me around 18 July as she and Rishi got into the final two,’ he said later. ‘We had written two books and collaborated together. It was always the understanding.’⁴ If it was, no one else was in on the understanding, and not everyone was pleased. Cabinet Secretary Simon Case for one. He was ‘pretty frank’ with Truss about the risks of appointing him. ‘I know Kwasi Kwarteng well,’ she told him, implying that she had his measure. Her reassurance didn’t totally convince the sceptics, recorded an insider. To succeed Kwarteng as Business Secretary she wanted Simon Clarke, although he felt unable to take the post for personal reasons, so she had to think again. Clarke was appointed to Levelling Up Secretary, swapped with Rees-Mogg who took the Business portfolio while keeping responsibility for Brexit opportunities to assuage his Treasury disappointment – a not inconsiderable empire.

These positions were all decided by Monday 22 August. The Cabinet Office sent down to Chevening the celebrated ‘whiteboard’ on which recent Prime Ministers and their teams have planned reshuffles. ‘Oh my goodness, the whiteboard exercise was grim,’ Truss later said.⁵ ‘The fact they sent it down to us two weeks before the result was a clear indication to us that the civil service thought we would win,’ said Fullbrook.⁶ With the board came Whitehall’s software programme, which the team refused to use because it had been written by a member of Cummings’ team. ‘We were not going to put our most secret stuff somewhere where that man could read our innermost thoughts,’ said an aide. Truss’s fear and hatred of Cummings permeated across her close advisers.

Only one position was already pledged before the board was even erected. No sooner had Truss made the offer of Home Secretary to Suella Braverman in mid-July than she regretted it. In addition to her Foreign Office team’s objections to the appointment she now had to cope with disapproval from Fullbrook as well. Fullbrook pressed her to rescind the offer on the grounds that Braverman was not loyal and would, he believed, brief against her. ‘I’m sorry, Mark, but it was decided before you joined the team,’ she confessed to him. As the big day approached, Truss herself

became increasingly anxious about the decision, wanting to make her Justice Secretary instead, and putting Brandon Lewis in as Home Secretary. Braverman would have none of it: Truss's attempt to renege on their deal did nothing to improve their relationship.

For her Cabinet-making, Truss leaned on a very small team. Apart from Fullbrook, the key influence was Coffey. She listened to Coffey. 'A former PM had told her that the one lesson she should know is that she cannot trust another politician 100 per cent. She told him he was wrong. She trusted Thérèse Coffey absolutely 100 per cent,' one recalled. Always earmarked for Deputy Prime Minister, Truss wanted her to combine the role with that of Chief Whip. 'Liz had a strong sense that the Chief Whip should be a woman, given the issues that had plagued Boris and ultimately led to his downfall. She was right in this regard. It was symbolically important,' said Stein.⁷ So when Coffey flatly turned her old friend down, Truss had to move quickly because time was short and the Chief Whip would be integral to the reshuffle. She rued her failure to persuade Iain Duncan Smith to do it. But he wanted a bigger job, not unreasonably having been party leader twenty years earlier, and she was getting desperate. Worrying that she wouldn't find someone in time, she alighted on Wendy Morton who had been a junior whip, won plaudits for her work on Truss's campaign and had an impeccable back story, being both state educated and representing a West Midlands constituency. Concerns she was relatively inexperienced and considered by some to be too gentle for the post were swept aside. 'Liz wanted to appoint someone who, after the Johnson years, would tackle the behavioural issues and set a new tone,' said one Truss parliamentary ally.

But had Truss gone too far the other way? In recent history the Chief Whip has often been a bruiser, especially with the Conservative Party being so fractious. Without a touch of fear and menace, it wasn't clear that this Chief Whip was going to be able to ensure control. Truss was aware of these concerns, and instituted a number of changes, including announcing that the whips were to be moved back to 12 Downing Street where they hadn't worked for twenty-one years (having been relocated to the less prestigious and non-adjacent 9 Downing Street in 2001), and though the

Chief Whip was only attending Cabinet (rather than a full member) Truss ensured that Morton became a member of her inner circle.

Nadhim Zahawi, eliminated after the first round of the MPs' ballots, was next. As Johnson's serving Chancellor, he was the highest ranking candidate for a job. He had made himself useful to Truss in her quest to secure long-term energy supplies; in Fullbrook, his former campaign manager, he had a strong ally too. She wanted to utilize his personal-management and organizational skills as a fixer across-the-board, facilitating government relations. So she slotted him into the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to allow him to range widely.

Mordaunt, eliminated after the fifth and final round of the MPs stage and with a demonstrably wide following among MPs and party membership, had wanted either to return as Defence Secretary or be promoted to one of the great offices of state, but Truss didn't want to move Wallace, least of all in the midst of the war in Ukraine, and the other spots of Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and Chancellor were taken. Mordaunt wasn't considered a friend, and Truss, loving her power, was in no mood to accommodate the wishes of the onetime front runner who had fallen only five MP votes short of her crown. Mordaunt was offered Party Chair or Northern Ireland Secretary, both of which she declined, reluctantly accepting instead Leader of the Commons.

In contrast, Truss liked Kemi Badenoch, who had been eliminated after the fourth round, but she had to make do with International Trade Secretary. Tom Tugendhat, eliminated after the third round, had been offered Foreign Secretary at the start of the competition if he backed her. He declined, only to come back to her some days later having changed his mind. Not the loyalty I require, Truss felt. 'So he got a much smaller thank you from her: he had had his opportunity,' said a member of the team dismissively. He had to make do as Minister for Security.

That left the job Iain Duncan Smith wanted: Foreign Secretary. James Cleverly had been one of Truss's Ministers of State at the Foreign Office. She liked and trusted him, so she gave him the nod, to the irritation of some of the staff, who complained, 'You are selling it too cheaply without getting

anything back.’ ‘She had loved being Foreign Secretary and it meant a lot to offer it to him,’ said an aide.

She made up the rest of the Cabinet by rewarding loyalists: Brandon Lewis to Justice Secretary, Ranil Jayawardena to Environment Secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan to Transport Secretary, Chris Philp to Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Jake Berry became Minister without Portfolio and Party Chair. Johnson loyalists Alister Jack was retained at the Scotland Office and Kit Malthouse at Education. Coffey on top of Deputy Prime Minister was given Health, an extraordinarily naïve move. The department was under considerable duress and demanded a full-time and experienced Cabinet minister. The DPM equally required a full-time incumbent. Both Coffey and Truss were responsible for the folly of her taking on both posts; as a result, a proficient politician managed neither DPM nor Health well.

The name that most stood out to contemporaries was Michael Ellis, who was appointed to the non-Cabinet (but attending) post of Attorney General. Why was this odd? Because he was the most senior Sunak supporter during the campaign to be given a job. ‘He was selected because we deemed him an honourable person, and it sent a message to the Sunak camp that all was not lost. We only needed one in that message,’ said a senior figure in Truss’s team. Job done, they thought. Or was it? Sunak ally Robert Jenrick, who had been Johnson’s Housing Secretary, was also given a junior post that Truss regarded as ‘the key olive branch to the Sunak side’, according to one close to Truss. But Chris Skidmore, who had jumped across to Truss during the party membership stage, was not but was asked to head up a review into Net Zero instead.

Truss decreed, not least because she considered Sunak’s team to have been so vicious in the final two weeks of the campaign, that there would be no further reaching out. ‘She regarded Rishi as screwing her in the campaign, alongside his team, and she was seething,’ said one of her side. She was never going to offer a job to Michael Gove; Sunak’s principal lieutenants Oliver Dowden, Dominic Raab, Julian Smith and Gavin Williamson were also overlooked. As was Sunak himself, having made it clear he wouldn’t accept any position. Truss’s personal dislike of him ran

very deep. Of all the members of Team Sunak, she came closest to appointing Raab, her predecessor as Foreign Secretary, but ‘Dom had made some disobliging comments about her and she worried that Labour would make great play of it, so he was passed over,’ said an aide. A series of Johnson’s ministers were told that their services were no longer required: Steve Barclay as Health Secretary, Greg Clark as Levelling Up Secretary and George Eustice as Environment Secretary. Proven senior Cabinet ministers Jeremy Hunt and Sajid Javid were bypassed. Simon Hart was removed as Welsh Secretary to be replaced by Robert Buckland.

The rationale was justified by harking back to her two female predecessors as Prime Minister. ‘She thought Thatcher had made a clear mistake by appointing enemies to her Cabinet and then having to get rid of them,’ said an insider, which speaks of Truss’s misreading of the history of early Thatcher. From Theresa May’s experience in July 2016 when she appointed a broad-based Cabinet including both strong Brexiteers and Remainers, she also took a lesson. The three years of in-fighting that followed, never more so than at the infamous ‘Chequers summit’ in July 2018 for crunch Brexit talks, were cited as showing the futility of a broad-based Cabinet. But the analogy breaks down because the world Truss faced in September 2022 was so totally different to the one May faced after July 2018. Rather, Truss’s attitude was ‘I’ve got to the top now’. Some confidants like junior minister Daniel Johnson advised her to go for a narrow-based Cabinet: ‘I thought she had so little time to make an impact, she needed to work just with loyalists,’ he said. ‘But I was wrong.’⁸ She didn’t need anyone to tell her what to do after her years of being patronized, as she saw it, by public school men. ‘I’ve beaten my enemies, I’ve beaten the f**king establishment. I’m not going to bother to build bridges,’ was her attitude, as described by a member of the team. ‘Having won she felt emboldened to do whatever she wanted: Liz habitually turned the dial up to 11, in the hope she’d get 70–80 per cent of what she wanted,’ but now, ‘she decided to take on most of the economic establishment, half the Tory party without the secure base to do it,’ said Adam Jones.⁹

Sophie Jarvis had her first row with Truss over her Cabinetmaking. ‘You haven’t got a majority of eighty,’ she told her. ‘You’ve got to bring people with you.’

‘I am not going to have any “wets” in Cabinet,’ Truss replied (harking back to Thatcher’s mistrusted centre-left ministers).

‘You can’t call them “wets”, Liz. You’ve got to form the government that will last.’

‘Sorry. Let’s just f**king go for it,’ was her tart response.

In opting for such a narrow Cabinet, Truss had gone against the advice from senior politicians. One of these was Mordaunt. ‘I completely understand, Penny, what you’re saying about my building a broad team,’ Truss had reassured her over the phone in late July when they discussed Mordaunt pledging her support.¹⁰ Mordaunt urged Truss to offer middle-ranking appointments to two Sunak supporters: Laura Farris and Kevin Hollinrake. Neither made the cut. Jayawardena, initially charged with overseeing the transition, was another to advocate breadth, suggesting figures such as Gillian Keegan, Damian Hinds and Greg Hands. ‘But to Liz, her attitude was “you are either for me or against me”’, a witness said. Jayawardena could get nowhere, and before long, Porter and Coffey had taken over.

Truss herself completely denies that she made an error in having a narrow Cabinet; indeed, that it even *was* a narrow Cabinet. One senior Cabinet loyalist said, ‘It was much broader than the Rishi Sunak Cabinet that followed. She gave jobs to those who had fought against her: Suella, Penny, Kemi and Tom. Rishi made it clear he wouldn’t accept a job. She appointed people on the left like Vicky Ford. She brought in people like Robert Jenrick, Michael Ellis and Vicky Prentis.’ They asked, ‘How can anyone say she appointed an ultra-loyal Cabinet when so few stood by her? The way they behaved was extraordinary.’

Even at the time, contemporary commentators foresaw trouble. ‘MPs are seething about her decision to appoint only friends and supporters to Cabinet, and to leave out so many experienced substantial figures,’ reported Andrew Marr on LBC.¹¹ ‘Perhaps the best way of illustrating the loss of

experience is @trussliz will be the only person who's continuously served in Cabinet for the last six years,' commented Gavin Barwell, May's latter chief of staff, on Twitter.¹² Without realizing it, she was compounding her problem of paper-thin support among backbenchers by alienating large swathes of the party's great and good. She even managed to upset the minnows, by leaving to Coffey and Morton junior ministerial hiring and firing. 'It was silly of Liz not to squeeze every ounce of goodwill out of people by being the one to appoint them, so things got off to a bad start on literally day one,' said a loyal MP.¹³

Coffey and Morton successfully lobbied to bring in some names who would add breadth as Ministers of State, including Victoria Prentis in Work and Welfare and Mark Spencer in Food, Farming and Fisheries. 'The criticisms that she was not inclusive are unfair,' Morton later said, agreeing with Truss.¹⁴ She and Coffey would put up a series of names on the whiteboard for her to say 'I like that, I don't like that'. The process frustrated her. She barely knew her MPs at that personal level, and did not have a good sense of who would be a good appointment and who not. She did not have the experience of Blair or Cameron, who had had years to lead and get to know their MPs (while also leading their party into an election and meeting candidates). She also suffered because she had no natural allies or supporters. Who was a 'Trussite'? Virtually no one.

Most indeed found it hard to empathize with her. The Brexiteers were sceptical because she had backed Remain until switching with fervour to the Leave camp after the referendum, while Remainers mistrusted her for that very reason. Moderate and centrist MPs thought she was unsound and apt to play to the gallery; an unpredictable firebrand in the eyes of some, to others a figure of ridicule.

Fullbrook masterminded the choreography of reshuffle appointments, with many being seen by Truss in her office the day before the formal handover. Those who were successful were presented with a letter picking out two or three initial objectives. Simon Case remarked that it was the smoothest transition he had seen in his time in Whitehall. It was remarkable

for another reason: Palace sources confirm that approving the list of her Cabinet was Queen Elizabeth II's final act as head of state before she died.

Cabinet and No. 10 Management

But it wasn't a smoothly functioning Cabinet, for all its being packed with allies. Cabinet management is a skill Prime Ministers must possess, with the ability to chair meetings efficiently, to handle big egos, to ensure business is properly transacted and ministers are taken along.

Truss arrived with some firm ideas about how she was going to run Cabinet. She had a particular dislike of leaking, born some say of deep experience. So she whittled down the numbers of special advisers and officials permitted to be in attendance, and banned even her own communications team. Even at the time, this struck many people as distinctly odd. When, days later, the first leak happened, 'she was extremely cross', said an official.

Altogether, she presided over six Cabinets: on 7, 9 and 23 September, and 11, 18 and 25 October. Officials noticed little change in her style, which was adequate if not sparkling or even commanding. But from the beginning there were ministers round the Cabinet table, including Mordaunt, who were bitter, felt they had been deceived and had seen their advice to appoint moderates ignored. Braverman was never convinced by Truss – they did not see eye-to-eye on cutting immigration, which was *the* central priority for Braverman – nor was Wallace – with whom she'd clashed over Ukraine. Even among the inner circle of Kwarteng, Coffey, Clarke and Rees-Mogg, there were divisions. The first three were sceptical of her inflexibility and unwillingness to listen to advice, most especially over the Mini-Budget. The seeds were sown for rancorous divisions.

However, all looked promising at her first Cabinet on the morning of Wednesday 7 September. 'She was very clear and very businesslike. She wanted everything done very properly,' said an official. She knew that her time was short, and she had to change the direction and performance of the government if she was to win the general election in 2024. Cabinet

ministers had been presented with letters listing their immediate priorities; these were updated, revised and distributed again two weeks later. One aide recalled that the process of preparing them was ‘incredibly painful’, and that Truss was ‘obsessed with getting these right’, asking for five redrafts for some of them. She wanted her Cabinet ministers to have clear instructions and to get on with their jobs. ‘As Prime Minister, I didn’t want to micromanage,’ she said.¹⁵

While some Cabinet ministers were grateful for the clarity of direction in their letters of appointment, others contested their instructions. Braverman wanted Truss to qualify the priority she was given to support growth ‘through legal immigration’ by underlining the aim ‘to reduce immigration in the medium term’. Wallace had different objections, requesting that Truss ‘remove references to the MoD facilitating return flights for illegal immigrants’, making it clear he did not want ‘defence capabilities and real estate used for this purpose’.

The appointment letters reveal Truss’s focus on the Mini-Budget and energy support package. She had ambitions across government, to be sure, albeit much of it retreads from earlier administrations, but these were totally subordinated to her ambitions for growth. Her plan for the Treasury stated that ‘Our most significant challenge is the historical and present weakness in economic growth. You should be radical and establish an immediate two-year plan, supported by a medium-term plan to boost UK productivity and target an increase trend growth to 2.5 per cent a year.’ The details included the need to ‘turbocharge the City’ and ‘reduce the overall tax burden on businesses and households’, while stressing the need to ‘maintain a firm grip on public spending’.

From Cameron, she also took the idea of a small, high-powered No. 10, although, as an official commented, ‘I’m not sure she ever really understood how it operated under him, or any other Prime Minister.’ She wanted everyone to be smart and wearing ties, and she wanted to distance herself from the shambolic informality of the Johnson years. His staff were unceremoniously dumped, with foreign affairs specialist and historian John Bew and aide Charlotte Owen two of the few survivors. One position she

sought to fill was Downing Street permanent secretary. Nick Catsaras pushed her hard on it, knowing that he wouldn't himself be in for the long run, and that he lacked the Treasury experience he thought vital to the role – the late Jeremy Heywood, who was ex-Treasury and had been Downing Street permanent secretary under Cameron before becoming Cabinet Secretary, was the model he had in mind. In James Bowler, who had worked happily with Truss as her permanent secretary at International Trade, Catsaras thought he had found the ideal candidate. But when Bowler turned it down for personal reasons, 'no suitable alternative could be found, and the idea petered out', said an aide. Simon Case, who had never been greatly enamoured with the idea, went on to do the job de facto, a role at which he did well.

'She invested enormous energy into thinking about No. 10, where everyone was to work, and how she wanted it to operate,' said an official overseeing the transition. The floor plans went through several iterations as she was never satisfied: 'It really mattered to her,' said an aide. No. 10, built in the seventeenth century as a house and modified higgledy-piggledy ever since, doesn't have a designated study for the Prime Minister to use. So she chopped and changed her mind about where she would work, ending up deciding, as had Major, that she'd use the large oblong Cabinet Room as her office. In Downing Street, proximity to the PM is power. The most sought-after space is the room through the double doors at the end of the Cabinet Room, sometimes called 'the den' in which most Prime Ministers from Blair to Johnson had worked. It was in here that Fullbrook, Porter, Catsaras and Jones were crammed, along with the Prime Minister's diary secretary and the ever-present duty clerk.

'We've blown up the No. 10 floor plan,' an aide said. *Spectator* journalist Katy Balls wrote that 'slimming down doesn't just set an example to other departments; it's also intended to create higher accountability'.¹⁶ Almost every Prime Minister arrives in Downing Street thinking that their predecessors had no idea, and that they know how to do it.¹⁷ Truss was no exception, and had a clear vision for No. 10, articulated at the time by Adam Jones: 'Liz doesn't want a presidential-style No. 10. She wants it to

be lean, professional and relentlessly focused on delivery, policy-making and legislating. You'll see fewer prime-ministerial visits, fewer events in No. 10, and in its place more meetings on the economy, on energy and the things people really care about.'¹⁸ As in all matters connected with her premiership, her ambitions were never fully realized.

The Private Office, historically the beating heart of Downing Street and staffed by civil servants, was to be her key power centre in the building. With a trio of stellar officials in Catsaras (principal private secretary), Ollie Illott (deputy) and Simon Billett (foreign affairs), this was her nerve centre, keeping control of her diary, meetings, paper flow and visits. Initially deeply suspicious, she created an unnecessary fuss when she saw an official who worked for Gove in the office. However, she soon learned to trust her officials. Not officials at large, of course, but those she knew.

If her Private Office had a weakness, it was Truss turning her back on appointing Treasury officials to the top two positions. Another historical anomaly: top positions in the Cabinet Office were thinly staffed by Treasury people. When the Mini-Budget hit the fan, it showed.

Other units within No. 10 she emasculated or moved. The Delivery Unit, data team and Legislative Affairs were all banished elsewhere, making way for a pruned communications team which came back into No. 10. This also made way for a brand new economic unit under Matt Sinclair, designed to help Truss and Kwarteng 'take on Treasury orthodoxy'. The Policy Unit, which had survived for fifty years since its creation in 1974, was all but disbanded because she thought it confusing for Whitehall to have instructions from both it and the Private Office. 'In her mind, she wanted No. 10 full of special advisers working for her, as she had had at the Foreign Office,' said an official.

However, from the beginning, Truss's No. 10 team suffered from organisational weakness. For example, Truss would not have a daily meeting with her team until David Canzini started to organise them towards the end of her premiership. She later wrote that she did not feel that the number of staff available in Downing Street was commensurate with the status of the office. She was surprised to have only about a hundred staff

directly working for her, in contrast to having thousands when in charge of a department.¹⁹

For all her not inconsiderable forethought, and the quality of many individuals within No. 10, it never worked very well under her. Some of the issues were picked up on at the time. ‘Everyone around Liz is quite young... I worry that they’re not ready for the challenges ahead,’ a Cabinet minister told the *Financial Times*.²⁰ Henry Hill on ConservativeHome worried that her smaller No. 10 would give too much power to the Treasury and other departments, and increase ‘the likelihood of media landmines’.²¹ More serious concerns were her lack of trust and secrecy, which inclined her to split jobs. Inevitably, this led to confusion. Adam Jones was political director of communications and Simon McGee official head of comms, with Jason Stein given a floating role. Policy was split between Jamie Hope and Matt Sinclair. Sophie Jarvis was political secretary, but Truss sought political advice from others including Ruth Porter, whose overlapping field with Mark Fullbrook as chief of staff was never clearly defined. They were all young apart from Fullbrook. There was no commanding figure like Jonathan Powell or Sally Morgan under Blair, nor Ed Llewellyn under Cameron, nor Gavin Barwell under May. There was no one to check her or put her in place. She had the No. 10 she wanted and perhaps deserved.

Sacking of the Treasury Permanent Secretary

The Prime Minister is head of the executive, and in that capacity, needs to ensure that Whitehall is working to execute government policy. The way the Prime Minister treats the civil service, as any leader with their employees, is widely noted. Any unfair blame and capricious dismissals do not inspire confidence.

The official with principal responsibility for public spending and balancing the nation’s books under Truss was Tom Scholar, permanent secretary at the Treasury since July 2016. He had been Downing Street principal private secretary to Gordon Brown, then the Treasury’s second permanent secretary, then the Prime Minister’s adviser for European and

global issues. He was regarded by many in Whitehall as indispensable, by ministers as a reassuring symbol of continuity, and by markets as a guarantor of the credibility of government policy – the mandarin's mandarin who would, had he applied for it, have been the obvious choice for Cabinet secretary in 2020 ahead of Case.

The relationship between the PM and the chief official in the Treasury is always of paramount importance. No civil servant apart from the Cabinet secretary is more senior and, given the paucity of economic advice at the Prime Minister's personal disposal, none so important over the economy. Although the permanent secretary works directly with the Chancellor, the Prime Minister needs to feel comfortable with the incumbent. Harold Macmillan thus appointed the congenial Frank Lee in 1960, Thatcher for the same reasons Peter Middleton in 1983, while Brown and Cameron were more than content with Scholar's predecessor, Nick Macpherson. There is no history of an incoming administration immediately replacing the Treasury permanent secretary.

But Truss was not comfortable with Scholar. She was prone to noticing slights and not forgetting them. Bad blood dated back to the time when she was Chief Secretary to the Treasury between 2017 and 2019. Chancellor Philip Hammond reportedly found her to be rather tiresome. 'She would turn up at his meetings with notes, and then spout. We would listen politely, and then he would tell her "I don't think that we will do that, Liz",' recalled a minister. Soon, the Private Office got into the habit of excluding her from important conversations, relying on the ploy of sending round a note to say 'no junior ministers for this meeting'. Officials and ministers testify to Scholar's personal courtesy and mildness of manner, but she saw him as patronizing and aloof, and responsible for her and her prescriptions being marginalized.

He epitomized everything she disliked about Treasury orthodoxy. 'She thought Scholar presided over an entire culture where the Treasury would say "no" as a reflex response and be the enemy of growth by adhering rigidly to "abacus economics" and book-balancing,' said a personal aide. It wasn't a blanket disgust: she liked some Treasury officials, notably James

Bowler, before she made him her permanent secretary at International Trade, and his deputy, Anthony Segal-Knowles.

Scholar was also a marked man from his time as the Prime Minister's Europe adviser during the negotiations for a new deal with the EU before the 2016 referendum. 'He was never forgiven, it is said, by Truss... for not getting more from the EU in those pre-2016 talks,' wrote conservative political commentator Iain Martin.²² Detractors blamed him for 'Project Fear' and 'for Turbocharging Philip Hammond's plans for a soft Brexit'.²³ Not hated and mistrusted as much by Brexiteers, maybe, as May's chief EU adviser Olly Robbins. But close.

Truss's sights were fixed on Scholar even while she was Foreign Secretary: 'He's not the right person to run the Treasury,' colleagues would hear her mutter periodically. During haggling over Foreign Office funding with the Treasury, Truss was sometimes heard to remark that Sunak and Scholar were personally frustrating what should have been a straightforward process. But for all this, Truss is adamant that 'the decision to replace Tom Scholar was Kwasi's. I felt it had to be his choice [to choose his own people].'²⁴ According to Kwarteng, they made up their mind to sack him the moment Johnson announced his resignation. 'We decided this at Greenwich in her house. Our understanding was he would go quite quickly,' he said.²⁵ The figure they set their heart on as his successor, if she ever became Prime Minister, was the permanent secretary when she first went to International Trade, Antonia Romeo. She was Truss's type of woman, her type of can-do official.

The anti-Scholar mood came out into the open when it became clear at Chevening that Truss would win the leadership contest. Articles started appearing in the press alleging that he was arrogant, kept her out of Budget discussions and wouldn't let her see key papers. Mid-August, a long profile in the *Daily Telegraph* talked about his work for Gordon Brown, while unsavoury allegations appeared elsewhere that he had been working from South America during the pandemic, which were subsequently proven to be untrue.²⁶ The 'useless' Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, was targeted too, as well as a host of other high priests of the 'blob' that

Truss was convinced was ruining Britain's economy. 'They thought they couldn't chop out both Andrew Bailey and Tom Scholar, so they went for the latter,' surmised one who was present at the Chevening talks. Truss wanted a public defenestration, and she wanted it immediately. 'It was a mixture of simple revenge, a statement that she was going to be radical, and a signal to civil servants that they [her government] were not going to let themselves be frustrated by them,' said a former Treasury and Bank of England official. 'Liz really had it in for the civil service, with plans to cut numbers back very significantly,' said an aide. 'They intended the sacking to send a message to the "blob": "Beware, no one is safe."' It was a classic action – take out one person and the others will fall into place,' said Fullbrook.²⁷ A rifle shot was to be the opening salvo.

Permanent secretaries in other departments had been dismissed by incoming governments before, but never this quickly or as brutally. Truss left it to Kwarteng to pull the trigger. He wanted to tell Scholar 'I love the Treasury, but there's one thing I need to have: my own permanent secretary', recalled an official. She was nervous he would bottle it: 'She was petrified he would go native, be too nice, and end up not doing it,' they added. Kwarteng summoned Scholar into his office at 7.30 p.m. on the day Truss became Prime Minister, Tuesday 6 September. There in the Chancellor's office, new to Kwarteng but deeply familiar to his guest, the new incumbent declared, 'I'll get straight to the point. You have seen in the leadership campaign criticism of the economic orthodoxy of the Treasury. You are the embodiment of that orthodoxy. So I need to see fresh leadership at the Treasury.' Scholar was shocked. The two men had had a cordial relationship over several years dating back to when Kwarteng had worked for Hammond for nine months. He had spoken to Scholar briefly at a routine meeting the week before, with no hint of what was coming. Kwarteng later recalled telling Scholar that he knew his father, the former permanent secretary Michael Scholar, and that 'it is nothing to do with you personally. You have been a great public servant.'²⁸

Scholar, who had had his five-year contract renewed only the previous year, stood his ground. 'You have a huge amount to do with a Budget by the

end of September and big ideas. It will take a lot of work here. My job leading the Treasury is to do what you and the Prime Minister want. I'm confident we can do it for you,' he replied, trying to gauge the response, 'but if, after the Budget, the relationship is not working for you, then we can have another talk.' Kwarteng says Scholar tried to bargain for a while but he was not going to budge on the decision.²⁹ Kwarteng gave the impression that he was distinctly uncomfortable and was operating under instructions. 'We've got nowhere to go on this,' he eventually said to Scholar, desperate for the agonizing discussion to be over. One of the most consequential conversations between the Chancellor and their permanent secretary in history had lasted just twenty minutes.

After collecting himself, Scholar made a record of the meeting and left the Treasury. He only spoke to the Chancellor's private office the following day. None of them had seen it coming. Scholar knew that with his open-ended employment contract the Chancellor was unable to dismiss him altogether, so it was a question of whether he would accept or not. He knew too that there was only one possible outcome, given that the Prime Minister endorsed it. So the next morning, he sent a message to Kwarteng's private secretary to say that he had accepted and that it should be announced immediately. The response came back: 'Leave it till Friday. We have the energy support package on Thursday, and they wouldn't want you to go giving the impression you were leaving as you disagreed with it.' Scholar responded, 'Friday will be fine.' But when it became obvious later that day that the Queen was dying and there would be a prolonged period when there could be no announcements, the plan was accelerated. A statement was released on the afternoon of Thursday 8 September.

The sacking was cheered by the right: 'A cause for celebration...[he was] a malign influence of Treasury orthodoxy at play,' wrote former minister Theodore Agnew in *The Times*, citing Scholar's passive resistance to creating a Treasury office in the North of England and botching Bounce Back loans during the Covid pandemic.³⁰ The establishment hit back at 'a new level of the growing trend of blaming the civil servants', in the words of the former head of the civil service Lord Kerslake.³¹ 'Sacking him makes

no sense. His experience would have been invaluable in the coming months,' wrote Scholar's predecessor Nick Macpherson.³² Even the most senior living civil servant, former Cabinet Secretary Lord Butler, felt compelled to take up his pen: 'It'll weaken them, but it'll also corrupt our system'.³³ Well, they would say that wouldn't they, Truss acolytes responded.

With Scholar gone, and no one yet to replace him, Truss and Kwarteng had a problem. No other figure had the depth of his experience, knowledge of gilt markets, or contacts across the financial sector, including the Bank of England. It all added to the uncertainty over how the economy might respond to the Mini-Budget. 'None of us asked the critical question: do we really understand the knock-on of losing him?' admitted a top Truss adviser. Officials who were already reticent about offering opinions that might not be congenial became even more guarded.

Meanwhile, the mood in the Treasury was 'shellshocked' and 'distracted', with many genuinely upset that a civil servant of his renown could be dispatched so peremptorily and so cruelly. Scholar, it was widely asserted, had always provided honest analysis, even when it was uncomfortable, and now he had paid the price – why take the risk? 'The atmosphere was very toxic and one in which people who provided criticism of their programme was seen as threatening,' one of Truss's advisers later admitted. Within the Treasury, the two most senior officials, Cat Little and Beth Russell, were promptly appointed acting permanent secretaries, working flat out to ensure that disruption and diminution in quality of advice was minimized.

Truss had no option but to rely more on Case, whose efficiency in making Scholar disappear quietly from the scene greatly impressed her. Thoughts of dismissing him too evaporated. From then until the end of her time in office, she was in debt to him. A premiership that opened with a determination to be free of civil servants and orthodox Tories was to end with her being utterly reliant upon three officials and a centrist politician.

The day Scholar departed, Truss had just forty-two days left in Downing Street before she announced her own departure.

The Verdict: Appoint the Best Cabinet?

Truss failed the test of appointing the best Cabinet more roundly than almost any other. She didn't appoint or nurture a Cabinet that would lead her government and rally around her. She didn't appoint a team in Downing Street to support and challenge her. And her precipitous first action as head of the executive branch demoralized Whitehall when she needed its support. 'We thought the system would work better because Scholar had gone,' said the Trussite minister who had advised her to go for an ultra-loyal Cabinet. 'We were wrong. It didn't.'



Rule Number Four: Prime Ministers must command the big events. Truss seems overwhelmed by the death of the Queen. Rather than seizing the opportunity to settle the nation, she did the opposite. Here she is reading at the funeral on Monday 19 September

4

COMMAND THE BIG EVENTS

7–19 September 2022

Prime ministerial performance is partly judged on how well the incumbent rises to major events. It is no coincidence that all the top rank Prime Ministers from Robert Walpole to Margaret Thatcher were able to command rather than be overwhelmed by their shocks and distractions. It is a mark of a great leader to turn a reversal or upset into a gain.

Several of the top tier Prime Ministers including Pitt the Younger, Lloyd George and Churchill were in office at times of major wars; others, like Gladstone and Attlee, during eras of major social change that they were able to channel and shape. It begs the question: do great leaders make history, or rather, are they made by major historical events? The answer perhaps is both.

It's certainly true that poor-performing Prime Ministers succumb to the great historic crises of the times. Famously, Lord North was unable to provide a commanding response to the revolutionary uprising in the thirteen British colonies in North America, and, like George III, was quite overwhelmed by events. Though, given the popularity of the American rebellion, and Britain's isolation on the world stage, it is hard to see how even the most resourceful Prime Minister could have won that war for Britain. Neither Asquith nor Chamberlain provided the quality of leadership required in the First and Second World Wars.

The majority of the fifty-eight Prime Ministers since 1721 have served at moments of relative calm and never had the opportunity to be tested in moments of extreme danger and challenge. Good leadership is often characterized by personal calm, clear-headed decision-making and moral example. Contrast Eden's frenetic and brittle response to the Suez Crisis

with the measured sangfroid demonstrated by his successor Macmillan, who dismissed the resignation of his Chancellor (and two Treasury ministers) in 1958 as ‘a little local difficulty’, before setting off on a Commonwealth tour and letting the crisis dissipate. Prime Ministers have to know when the time is right to make light of a crisis. Most famously, Callaghan misjudged the national mood amid widespread industrial action when, returning from a conference in Guadalupe, he testily responded to a journalist’s question about the crisis at home with ‘I don’t think that other people in the world would share the view that there is mounting chaos.’ The *Sun* responded to his nonchalant response with the headline ‘Crisis? What crisis?’, a phrase that has coloured the entire perception of his three-year premiership.¹

Unfortunately, Liz Truss had two significant moments to master, both coming at the very start of her premiership. The first was the energy crisis, the second was the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The latter made her the first Prime Minister to handle the death of a monarch since Churchill seventy years before. If she misplayed the first, she would have faced her own ‘winter of discontent’, as Callaghan did; misplay the second, and she would have become a figure of national ridicule.

The Energy Crisis: 5–8 September

Soaring gas prices during the Ukraine War had been a regular talking point during the leadership election in July and August. At first, Truss said very deliberately that she would not favour any package of energy support, uttering her much-analysed words to the *Financial Times* in August that ‘there would be no further handouts’. But then she changed her mind. Why?

The confidential briefing overseen by Simon Case in 70 Whitehall in early August had spooked her. Some advisers told her to hold her nerve. ‘We don’t need to offer any package, Liz,’ one said. But others on the right argued differently. ‘In August, there was a very real threat that the crisis would turn into a catastrophe,’ economic adviser Julian Jessop wrote later, ‘with some estimates that the average household [energy] bill would jump

to £6,000 a year, driving inflation to 20 per cent.’² ‘She and Kwasi decided from very early in the campaign to intervene, but she couldn’t say so publicly till the end,’ said one of Truss’s senior advisers. As she had ruled out means testing and a windfall tax on the energy companies, it would have to be a price guarantee, and those who queried the cost would be ignored. ‘There was more than a touch of Boris and financial cakeism about Liz at times,’ remarked one senior adviser, referring to what *Financial Times* journalist Gideon Rachman described as Johnson’s ‘notion that it is possible to govern without making hard choices’.³ ‘She was adamant it was going to be a decisive intervention to kill the problem, hard and fast at the very beginning,’ recalls a minister.

Truss’s senior economic team became progressively alarmed, though, at the sheer scale of intervention she was proposing. On Friday 2 September, Kwarteng and Philp held an emergency meeting. They estimated that her envisaged package could cost as much as £150 billion. For context, public expenditure over 2021–22 *in total* was £1,185 billion, so £150 billion was over 10 per cent of that cost, a greater figure than the budget of Education and Defence combined.⁴

They frantically looked at ideas to mitigate the sum. Philp’s idea was a 5 per cent surcharge on customers’ energy bills to be in force for twenty years to recoup at least some of the cost of the intervention. When they put it to Truss, she responded sceptically, ‘That sounds to me like a new tax. We should absolutely not be doing that.’ ‘But it will help reassure the bond market,’ Kwarteng interjected. ‘No, no, no,’ she retorted. According to one of her incoming ministers, ‘Liz was not willing to give even five or ten minutes to listen to our concerns. She ruled them out totally.’

On Monday 5 September, the day her victory over Sunak was announced at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, she spent her last hours before becoming Prime Minister at Admiralty House. This is the eighteenth-century building facing Horse Guards Parade, where Prime Ministers decamp when Downing Street is out of action (as it was during the 1958–60 renovation or when it needed to be repaired after the IRA’s 1991 mortar attack). The scene was mayhem with staff meeting each other often for the

first time, and a small team huddled around the whiteboard with details of the reshuffle still to be finalized. At 4.15 p.m. a high-level meeting was convened to finalize the details of the energy support package. ‘She was contemptuous of any attempt to mitigate the expense,’ said one present. Then she announced out of the blue that she would set the price-ceiling for a typical home at £2,500, not £3,000, ‘a £10 billion plus decision taken on her own in less than thirty seconds’, said another. The meeting ended tensely.

Kwarteng seized a last opportunity to convince her to moderate the energy proposals, asking her to have a discussion in the courtyard outside the building so they could converse in confidence. ‘I urged her again to claw back the huge spend over twenty years. But she categorically said “no”. I told her that the OBR would’ve scored it as a net [debt] zero if we had done so, but she wasn’t listening to me,’ he said.⁵ Seriously worried now, he sought out Porter to try to enlist her support. ‘Sorry. Liz wants a full-on intervention,’ Porter told him emphatically. Her tone suggested to the Chancellor-elect that the conversation was over.

‘I should have stood up to Liz more,’ he later said. ‘My mistake was to tell her “you’ve won the election fight. We’re now here to do what you want.”’ He ascribed his reluctance to all his reading about ‘the destructive spats between Chancellors and the Prime Minister’: ‘I’d read books on the Chancellors by Edmund Dell and Roy Jenkins, I’d devoured the Lawson memoirs and I had seen close up the totally destructive and dysfunctional relationship between Rishi Sunak and Boris Johnson, which was much worse than that between Philip Hammond and Theresa May, and I had formed the view the Chancellor should defer to the Prime Minister.’⁶ Truss was no longer listening to him and Philp but was leaning more to her political team, particularly Hope and Jones, who reminded her that Sunak had borrowed £400 billion during Covid without unsettling the markets, and that, given the gravity of the energy price crisis, markets would probably be equally relaxed about her new measures. She also reassured herself that the UK fiscal position was basically sound with a lower debt-to-GDP ratio than

most developed countries. ‘She didn’t need to listen to advisers on any side: she had made up her own mind that she was in the right,’ said an aide.

That evening, she slipped away for a victory party at the Deliveroo headquarters in the City of London, circling the room for thirty minutes before returning to Admiralty House, even though she had planned to be there for two hours. In the small flat at the top of the building, recently vacated by Johnson’s chief of staff Steve Barclay, she sat down for a few drinks and takeaway pizza with her family, senior staff and old Foreign Office team: husband Hugh and daughters Frances and Liberty, Coffey, Fullbrook, Hope, Jarvis and Jones. ‘Time for bed,’ Fullbrook said before midnight, ‘we have a big day tomorrow.’

The energy support package was still not finalized on Tuesday 6 September, which proved an unusually fraught day for the incoming Prime Minister. Appointments and initial statements usually fill the head of the new PM at this stage; instead, Truss was having to think about a major policy announcement and a severely ailing monarch. Truss rose early that morning to pore over the package’s final details and her appointments.

Her team were itching for Johnson and his staff to quit Downing Street (it had been nine weeks since he’d announced his resignation) so they could move in. After an emotional farewell breakfast with his close supporters in No. 10’s Pillared Drawing Room, Johnson emerged onto Downing Street at 7.30 a.m. to give his speech to the waiting media. Bar a swipe at how the 1922 Committee ‘changed the rules halfway through’, his words were more gracious than his angry resignation speech in July. He promised to support his successor ‘every step of the way’ before being driven to RAF Northolt to board a plane to Aberdeen. In Aberdeen he boarded a helicopter to Balmoral, arriving at 11 a.m. and leaving just before midday. The Queen had travelled to Balmoral in July for her regular summer break. But all was not well for the ninety-six-year-old monarch. During the Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June, she was notably absent from some of the major events. On Friday 2 September, it was announced that she would miss the Braemar Highland Gathering for only the fifth time in seventy years due to ‘mobility issues’. That was also the explanation for why she remained at Balmoral

and did not return to London to appoint the new Prime Minister. Asking both leaders to make a 1,000-mile round journey on such a day was not a decision that she had taken lightly.

Truss had left Admiralty House for RAF Northolt herself soon after 9 a.m. with Hugh by her side, as well as Principal Private Secretary Catsaras, who was moving with her from the Foreign Office, and Jones in the second car. As they drove through the streets of West London, surrounded by police outriders on motorcycles, Catsaras was in contact with the office about her timetable, while Jones worked on her forthcoming statements. The weather was deteriorating and there were concerns about her plane landing at Aberdeen and the onward helicopter journey. The absolute safety of the incoming Prime Minister was paramount. Truss's despised 'deep state' was not going to take any risks with her safety, least of all at a time of such economic and political turbulence.

At 12.25 p.m., only slightly behind schedule, her party arrived at Balmoral. Truss was greeted at the royal residence's door by Edward Young, private secretary to the Queen, who in the days before had been forging a close relationship with Catsaras: together with Case as Cabinet Secretary, the three officials formed the 'golden triangle' at the heart of the British Constitution.⁷ The Palace was anxious to avoid a repetition of the unfamiliarity with the Prime Minister's principal private secretary that had occurred when Johnson had suddenly kicked out the very capable Peter Hill in favour of the unsuspecting but proficient Martin Reynolds, with whom he had worked closely when Foreign Secretary. It still rankled with the Palace that, a month after Johnson succeeded in 2019, the Queen, on his direct advice that she was bound to follow, ordered Parliament to be prorogued, advice that was later ruled unlawful. Had a more familiar relationship between the principals been in place, the damage might have been mitigated.

At 12.52 p.m., the Palace released confirmation that Truss had been appointed Prime Minister, with a photograph of her meeting the Queen. 'Her Majesty was on sparkling form,' said one present. A few days earlier, knowing that the audience was coming up but before the winner in the

leadership election had been announced, she told a courtier, 'I'm going to be bouncing into the room to greet them.' After the audience was over, Young requested a personal meeting with Truss. Unlike Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, there is no private room for them nearby to use, so they had to ask for the library (where the waiting party were having tea) to be cleared; he then explained that the Queen might not live much longer. 'It was a shock: I mean, I knew us travelling up to Balmoral was not good news, but I hadn't anticipated the speed,' said Truss.⁸

Reeling from what she had been told, while giving nothing away to her team, Truss underwent the same journey in reverse, helicopter, plane, police-escorted car journey back to Downing Street. All the way home she was worrying about her speech. 'It's going to be a bloody difficult first six months. We've got to hit the ground running. There's no time to bed in and admire the furniture,' she said to her team, while also constantly probing for reassurance. "'Am I doing the right thing? Am I framing it the right way? Have I practised the speech enough?'" recalled an aide.

At 4.55 p.m., with rain bucketing down and the Downing Street lectern covered by an unsightly black bag, Catsaras and Jones were in conversation with Truss's team about whether she should give her initial speech from inside No. 10. The potential for bad headlines from an incoming Prime Minister trying to make herself heard over a downpour while getting drenched was very real in everyone's minds (and one that subsequent Prime Ministers ought to have borne in mind). 'Absolutely not', was Truss's response. The police were asked to put in some extra loops over Thames bridges on the route back from RAF Northolt to eat up time, given that for security reasons the Prime Minister's convoy is never allowed to stop except for collection or dropping off. All the while, her team inside No. 10 watched the aerial footage of the convoy wending its way through the rain on Sky News, powerless to change the weather. Sitting in the back of her car with Hugh, Truss tried to focus her attention on the speech she was shortly to deliver. At 5 p.m. came a break in the rain. 'Waiting for it to stop was the most stressful moment of my life,' said Clare Evans, her new head of operations. 'But then suddenly there was a break in the clouds, and we

urgently called for the car to swiftly deliver her to Downing Street where she was able to have her much-anticipated moment in the glorious sunshine.’⁹

Her six-minute speech encapsulated her entire ambition for government. It opened with a passage of necessary obeisance: her paying ‘tribute to my predecessor, Boris Johnson’ who ‘delivered Brexit, the Covid vaccine, and stood up to Russian aggression. History will see him as a hugely consequential Prime Minister.’ She then outlined the three priorities that would have defined ‘Trussism’, had such a word ever emerged. First, ‘grow the economy through tax cuts and reform’, which lay at the heart of her thinking. Second, ‘take action to help with energy bills and to secure our future energy supply’. Third, ‘put our health service on a firm footing’. In the short term, this meant reducing waiting lists, but in the long term, she had ideas for root-and-branch reform of the NHS.¹⁰ She was driving the first goal, and the second, and she intended Coffey to galvanize the third.

All incoming Prime Ministers, in a tradition dating back to the early post-war years, are clapped in by staff standing on either side of the long corridor from the front hall all the way down to the Cabinet Room at the other end. The PM is traditionally greeted at the front door by the country’s most senior civil servant, in her instance Case, who escorts them into the Cabinet Room where they are told about the ‘letters-of-last-resort’ to be dispatched in sealed envelopes to the four Royal Navy nuclear submarine commanders in the event of a nuclear war. The Prime Minister indicates their intention in a handwritten letter that is then sealed. The average deployment of a British Vanguard-class nuclear submarine is estimated to be five and a half months, which raises the possibility that Truss’s letters never found their way on board a submarine before they were destroyed and superseded by Rishi Sunak’s letters six weeks later (though it also leaves open a remote chance that Truss’s writ continued in a submarine safe under the ocean for many months after the end of her short-lived government).¹¹ In her bellicose mood, she might have given instructions to retaliate against Moscow, Beijing or Pyongyang; the world incinerated on the instructions of a forty-nine-day Prime Minister no longer in office.

In the early evening, she went back to the Cabinet Room for Fullbrook's carefully choreographed plan of appointing new ministers. 'It worked like clockwork,' said a member of her team. 'They would go in to see her one by one, then out they would come, meet their new principal private secretary from their department then their close protection team, have a session with Propriety and Ethics to talk through the hazards of their jobs, and forty-five minutes later, off they would go as secretaries of state.' Phone calls also took place at 7.30 and 8.30 p.m. with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine and President Biden. The order was deliberate and noted in the White House and beyond.

Her team worked late into the night. Catsaras had wanted them to be given individual 'London Bridge briefings' (the name for the funeral plan for the Queen, first devised in the 1960s with many changes since), though most assumed this was just a formality for incomers and had no apprehension of the urgency. Case caught Clare Evans and asked her to check that Truss had some black clothes in the building. She went up to the PM's flat at the top of Downing Street and worked her way through the two suitcases that had already been taken upstairs. When she told Case she could find nothing suitable, he suggested that she go in his car back to the Truss home in Greenwich and come back with all the black dresses she could lay her hands on, plus a black tie for Hugh. With the Downing Street flat still a mess and lacking the family's furniture, the decision was taken that the family would be more comfortable spending the night together back in Admiralty House. Few arriving at No. 10 as Prime Minister fully grasp the extent to which their spouse and children are swept up into the experience, whether they want to be or not. Truss and her family were about to learn how radically their lives were to change.

Wednesday 7 September, her second day in office, was the crunch day; decisions piled in on Truss, not least last-minute appointments. Even her most senior colleagues found it hard to obtain an audience with her. She managed a cool head nevertheless for her first Cabinet meeting as PM at 8.30 a.m., and then she went straight into her Prime Minister's Questions briefing, before being driven to the House of Commons for her first PMQs

at midday, a baptism of fire for any incoming leader. First impressions count.

Given her concerns about the loyalty of her MPs, she was relieved when she heard them applauding her loudly as she said, ‘I am honoured to take my place as Prime Minister in this House and to take on responsibility at a vital time for our country.’ Her briefing was on the spot, and she was more than ready for Leader of the Opposition Keir Starmer’s questions about why she wasn’t going for a windfall tax on high-earning energy companies to pay for the energy support package due to be announced the following day. ‘I believe it is the wrong thing to be putting companies off investing in the United Kingdom, just when we need to be growing the economy,’ she replied, while praising Starmer for his ‘strong support... in opposing Vladimir Putin’s appalling war in Ukraine... which has led to the energy crisis’.

‘But the money has got to come from somewhere,’ Starmer responded. ‘The Prime Minister knows that every single pound in excess profits that she chooses not to tax is an extra pound on borrowing that working people will be forced to pay back for decades to come.’ Truss shot back with her prepared reply: ‘The reality is that this country will not be able to tax its way to growth.’

Starmer was well aware that eyes were on him too as he levelled up to his second PMQ adversary, and a much more assiduous one than the first. ‘The Prime Minister claims to be breaking orthodoxy, but the reality is that she’s... protecting oil and gas profits, and forcing working people to pay the bill.’

Relief came from an unlikely place, Truss’s former boss Theresa May, who, still joyful at having seen the end of Johnson’s premiership, welcomed her as ‘the third female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom’, asking, ‘Why does she think it is that all three female Prime Ministers have been Conservatives?’ Truss, thanking her for her ‘fantastic question’, responded that it was indeed extraordinary that Labour was unable to find a female leader, ‘or a leader who does not come from North London’. It was as if she knew May’s question was coming.¹²

She emerged as the clear winner in the eyes of most observers. ‘Liz Truss sailed through her first PMQs which will probably be her easiest. It may turn out to have been her best,’ wrote Lloyd Evans in the *Spectator* with prescience.¹³ ‘Tory MPs will feel relieved... She does have skill, and she showed it. She has the immense advantage of knowing what she thinks, and briefing herself properly, advantages Johnson did not always possess,’ Daniel Finkelstein wrote in *The Times*.¹⁴ Tory MPs liked her advocacy of lower taxes and no windfall tax, the upbeat mood continuing that afternoon when she addressed the 1922 Committee at 4 p.m. ‘Teamwork’, she told her backbenchers, would be central to her government, announcing with pride that she was going to be moving the whips’ office back into the heart of Downing Street thereby ensuring close liaison with the parliamentary party. She knew how frustrated many MPs had been with the figurative distance between No. 10 and the parliamentary party in recent years. ‘She was very good at understanding some of the real concerns of backbenchers... in terms of some of the changes at No. 10,’ said prominent Brexit and ERG member Mark Francois after the meeting.¹⁵ But, despite the generally good-tempered reception, the MPs at large were still deeply suspicious of their new Prime Minister.

She was back at work early on the morning of Thursday 8 September finalizing the details of the Energy Price Guarantee. Energy Secretary Rees-Mogg suggested that she announce it not as a separate statement, but as part of the debate, which her officials thought a mistake because it meant ‘that she was regularly interrupted, and couldn’t deliver it in one piece’. Choosing to announce the measures herself, she rose to her feet at 11.40 a.m. to say energy bills would be frozen at an average of £2,500 a year for two years as part of a package of support for homes and businesses, the money to be funded through increased borrowing. Her plan included a review of Net Zero, suspension of green levies, ending the moratorium on extracting shale gas, and ‘a Great British Nuclear’ project to be launched with the aim of delivering a quarter of electricity generation by nuclear power by 2050. The figure of £150 billion in transfer of taxpayer funds to energy suppliers was being widely talked about, though she did not give

any indication of the cost in her speech, saying only that the Chancellor would provide figures later in the month.¹⁶ Her speech received a scathing response from Starmer, criticizing the reliance on borrowing, the strong focus on oil and gas, the lack of encouragement for home insulation and the failure to place windfall taxes on the profit-rich suppliers.¹⁷

That judgement was harsh. Truss showed decisiveness in pushing ahead in response to the significant inherited crisis with her Energy Price Guarantee, which ended up costing a fraction of the £150 billion predicted – £27 billion overall.¹⁸ It did bring comfort and stability to both homes and businesses over the period of 2022–24. What few predicted, though, was that the markets would not be as accepting of the scale of the intervention as they had been over furlough during the pandemic, especially when that was coupled with the ambitions of the Mini-Budget, and an absence of fiscal prudence.

The Death of the Queen: 8–19 September

Since the office came into existence in 1721, only nine previous Prime Ministers had witnessed the death of a reigning monarch and the coronation of their successor. Yet ten monarchs have witnessed the transition of fifty-six Prime Ministers.

Queen Elizabeth II presided over fourteen Prime Ministers in what became the longest-serving monarchy in British history at seventy years and 214 days. Truss, her final PM, was born (in July 1975) over a hundred years after her first, Churchill (born November 1874). Some of Truss's team speculated at the pride the Queen must have felt that her final Prime Minister was a woman bearing her own name to usher in a new Elizabethan Age. Confirmation of this claim from the Palace was not forthcoming.

Truss was on alert following her tipoff from Edward Young at Balmoral, and, when securely back in Downing Street, was shown the London Bridge plans, many years in the making, to be activated on the Queen's death. These described in minute detail what the Prime Minister and other key people should do. On the evening of Wednesday 7 September, a virtual

Privy Council meeting was due to be convened at the secure COBRA conference room beneath Downing Street to allow Truss to swear her oath as First Lord of the Treasury and for Cabinet ministers to be sworn in. The Queen was to join remotely, conducting the meeting from her bedroom at Balmoral. Thirty minutes before the meeting was due to start, the message came from Balmoral that the Queen would be communicating by conference call, and would not be visible. Then just five minutes before the start, Young telephoned Case to say that the Queen was too unwell even to talk over the phone, leaving Case to announce the news to curious attenders. Shortly after, an official bulletin from the Palace said: ‘After a full day yesterday, Her Majesty has this afternoon accepted doctors’ advice to rest.’¹⁹ Case and Young had been communicating for several months about the Queen’s health, but even so, neither fully anticipated this precipitous deterioration.

Early on Thursday morning, 8 September, Truss was in Parliament to announce her energy support package. Young called Case’s mobile: ‘I think it might just be hours,’ he announced solemnly. Nadhim Zahawi was in the Cabinet Office when ‘I had a call to say that she was deteriorating rapidly, and that the Palace would be putting out a bulletin about her health at 11.15,’ he recalled.²⁰ As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, having been Chancellor of the Exchequer just forty-eight hours before, he suddenly had to absorb the fact that he was now the national lead on Operation London Bridge. He quickly sized up the position. ‘Where is the Prime Minister?’ he asked.

‘In the House of Commons speaking,’ his staff told him. ‘We can’t have her in the Chamber when the Palace makes the announcement because she won’t have been briefed,’ he said. He urgently needed to speak to the country’s most senior official: ‘Where is Simon Case?’ he demanded. ‘Already in the Prime Minister’s office in the House of Commons waiting for her,’ came the reply. While travelling the short distance to Parliament, Zahawi spoke to Case, who had penned some words for the PM to say from the despatch box, and had them cleared with the Palace. With events

moving very rapidly, the Palace then said they needed more time before anything was said.

Zahawi arrived in Parliament and made his way to Truss in the Chamber to hand her Case's notes and brief her on the fast-developing situation. Once extracted from the Chamber, he told her that they needed to proceed urgently to her room where he and Case were about to chair a meeting with London Bridge top brass, including Sarah Healey, permanent secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, who now assumed a new responsibility leading the team in the Cabinet Office coordinating all the arrangements across government and partners. 'The mood was very odd. Some were thinking she had already died. Others were just aware that something momentous was unfolding. We all felt for the London Bridge team, which was on the cusp of being activated,' said an aide. One old hand reflected, 'It was as if the 2012 Olympics was suddenly roaring to life with less than twelve hours' notice.'

Truss herself remained very quiet, her head reeling after her energy announcement and trying to absorb the news about what the Queen's death would mean for her and her premiership. She intervened with a couple of practical questions about timing, but was content that others were leading the way. At 12.30 p.m., the meeting was over. The Palace publicly announced: 'The Queen's doctors are concerned for Her Majesty's health and have recommended she remain under medical supervision.' A few moments later, the short statement that Zahawi and Case had cobbled together on the Queen's health was read to the Chamber by the Speaker.

Zahawi had arranged for a message written by Case to be passed to Starmer and Labour's deputy leader Angela Rayner asking them to leave the Chamber and to meet him and Case in a small room behind the Speaker's chair. Then Case called Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to break the news to her in Scotland.²¹

Truss's team had been agonizing over whether she should cancel an evening call with French President Emmanuel Macron. 'The pressure was on to postpone it, but we wanted to keep everything in the diary so that our allies wouldn't assume that the monarch had already died,' said an official.

The key decisions on such occasions were being taken by Britain's three top officials: Simon Case, Nick Catsaras and Edward Young at the Palace. The similar-ranked permanent secretary at the Treasury would have been checking in with financial updates, had there been one. This was, perhaps, the 'deep state' in action, but even Truss on this occasion did not think they were acting with any sinister motive.

She was driven back to No. 10 where the decision was taken for her to proceed with another scheduled call with allied leaders including President Biden, President Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz, to discuss Ukraine.²² While it was in full flow, she received a message that the Queen was deteriorating rapidly. 'I will have to leave,' she told her fellow leaders. President Biden made a point of sending his best wishes.

Truss needed to be somewhere more secure and quiet than her office in the Cabinet Room, so she asked a small group to convene in the still largely empty flat at the top of Downing Street. Her most trusted team had gathered round her on sofas and boxes when Case's phone vibrated. 'It is Sir Edward calling,' Case said to the assembled group. London Bridge decreed that the Queen's Private Secretary (rather than a member of the family or a medic; this was, after all, still an official duty) would convey the news of her death via a secure telephone line to the PM direct, or to their most senior official, who would then pass on the news that 'London Bridge is down'.

Case tried to find a quiet space by the window a little distance away from everyone but they could hear his every word. 'Good afternoon, Sir Edward,' he began. The group could only hear one side of the call but it rapidly became clear that Young was telling him that the Queen had died, at 3.10 p.m. When Case said, 'Please pass on my condolences to His Majesty the King', there was an audible gasp in the room. Conversation between the two then focused on the timing of the official announcement once the family had been told. 'There was an electric response when we all heard for the first time the words "the King",' said one. Everyone sat in total silence till Case concluded his conversation with 'God save the King'.

Accounts differ about how the company reacted, but it is clear that the silence lasted some five to ten minutes, and that Truss herself, as most

present, shed a tear and more at the news. The stillness was only punctured when Case and Catsaras announced, 'It's time for us to get back to work', as the housekeeper arrived with cups of tea. 'It was all very British,' one present recalled. The housekeeper then had to be asked politely if she would mind waiting with them in the flat till the news was generally known, as it was so obvious to her what had happened.

Truss had already wanted to make it clear via Catsaras that there would be no interference whatsoever from Downing Street in Operation London Bridge. 'The last thing anyone needed was No. 10 meddling,' said an official, scarred by memories of No. 10 interventions in royal matters dating back to the death of Princess Diana in 1997. The bond between Downing Street and the Palace, which had several low points during the Queen's reign, was significantly aided by Case having worked as Prince William's private secretary as well as principal private secretary to the Prime Minister before becoming Cabinet secretary. 'Simon was indispensable throughout,' said one of the team. 'Calm, assured and strong, and she trusted him completely.' On Case's side, he was struck by how Truss, not renowned for her ability to listen to advice, least of all from officials, went out of her way to follow London Bridge advice to the very last letter.

Eyes dried, preparing Truss's statement was now the priority for the team in the flat. She read the long-prepared draft that came from long-standing and respected Downing Street speechwriter Tim Kiddell. But she decided there and then to discard the official text, and wrote her own with some assistance from Jones and Kiddell.²³

Shortly after the news was broadcast on the BBC and across all outlets at 6.30 p.m. she went downstairs to deliver her speech. Churchillian it was not: 'The death of Her Majesty the Queen is a huge shock to the nation and to the world. Queen Elizabeth II was the rock on which modern Britain was built... Through thick and thin, Queen Elizabeth II provided us with the stability and the strength that we needed.' Her speech was the first official confirmation of the 'regnal name' (to give it its official title) of King Charles III. This put to rest years of speculation, given the unhappy stories of the two earlier Charles, that he would call himself 'George VII' or some

other name. She finished by declaiming, ‘God save the King.’²⁴ It was an effective and heartfelt tribute, if not memorable. When Truss came back into the building, she sought affirmation from her team, but no one was in the mood to give it.

Afterwards, she was rushed down to the COBRA room for the first daily meeting of the committee that would oversee the entire operation. She spoke briefly at the start to say that she would be handing over the chair to Zahawi, wished them luck and crisply departed. Later that evening, utterly drained, she retreated to the Downing Street flat with Hugh and their daughters.

Downstairs, in the bowels of Downing Street, the Private Office team battled to rearrange her diary, weeks in the preparation, and to work out how they could secure sufficient black clothes for her to cover the entire ten days of official mourning.

Truss found the sudden loss of ten days challenging. One of her advisers said that she seemed to be ‘the deputy monarch’, operating under instructions from others, and the attention of the national and world media was no longer on her but on the Royal Family. She rued the total lack of publicity for her bold energy support package, utterly swallowed up by wave after wave of royal stories as if the announcement had never happened. Yet it seemed she never resented the intrusion on her space; she understood that this was a pivotal event in the history of the nation.

Attempts to make a storm over a video of anti-monarchy comments she had made aged nineteen in 1994 came to nothing (when she told the Lib Dem conference that she was against the ‘born to rule’ royals and favoured the abolition of the monarchy).²⁵ Whatever she may have believed as a young woman, by 2022 she was solidly, if never exuberantly, a monarchist. ‘For all her dislike of the status quo and the “blob”, she felt nothing but dutiful honour to be the Prime Minister at such a momentous point in British history,’ said an aide. ‘She was reverential to the institution and the incumbent,’ said another. Nor did stories damage her that circulated just after the Queen’s death that she planned to tour the UK with the King on walkabouts. No. 10 quickly moved to pour cold water on the idea, pointing

out that she would be attending services in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, but nothing more.²⁶

Truss was not involved in day-to-day operations after her brief initial appearance at COBRA as London prepared for the biggest gathering of foreign leaders in British history, including one hundred presidents and heads of government. Keeping them safe and their schedules working on time when flights over Windsor Castle (directly under Heathrow's flight path) were often impossible, and when many had to leave straight away after the funeral to go on to the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York, was a challenge. So too was keeping a close eye on the '700 obsessives' whom the intelligence agencies had identified as potential risks while also ensuring maximum freedom of movement for the 250,000 who filed past the Queen's coffin in Westminster Hall during the four days of lying in state. 'Let me know anything I can do to help, or any blockages I can remove,' she said very early on to Zahawi. But he never called on her help, not once.

Working on her tribute for the formal ceremony in Parliament took her attention from early the following day. Cabinet, the second she chaired, met at 9.30 a.m. She opened the meeting by saying the whole country was in shock, and it was 'especially poignant' that they were sitting around the table as the last Cabinet members ever to serve under Elizabeth II. They also had the honour, she said, of being the first Cabinet of King Charles III: 'We will serve our new sovereign with the same loyalty and devotion.' She continued by talking about the 'great responsibility' they all had to lead the country through this time, 'a huge logistical undertaking', with 'the eyes of the world... on us. And we've got to get this right.' She then turned to Sarah Healey to provide an overview of the arrangements for the following ten days, before asking for tributes from each Cabinet minister in order of seniority. She concluded by saying, 'Thank you for your tributes. In the coming days, we will have the opportunity to mourn with the nation and the world... And to do whatever is necessary to support a smooth transition to the new reign.'

The meeting finished at 10.30 a.m., allowing her an hour to prepare for tributes in the House of Commons, which opened at noon. Truss had forged what she regarded as a personal relationship with the Queen over the years. ‘She remained determined to carry out her duties, even at the age of ninety-six. It was just three days ago, at Balmoral, that she invited me to form the Government and become her fifteenth Prime Minister... She generously shared with me her deep experience of government, even in those last days,’ she concluded. The speech was sincere, and acknowledged as such, even if overshadowed by Johnson, who spoke about ‘her humility – her single-bar electric-fire, Tupperware-using refusal to be grand. I can tell the House... she drove herself in her own car, with no detectives and no bodyguard, bouncing at alarming speed over the Scottish landscape’. Theresa May then delivered one of her best speeches, moving and witty, as when she described the weekly audience as ‘the one meeting I went to that I knew would not be briefed out to the media’, or when she dropped some cheese on the ground at a picnic during the annual PM visit to Balmoral, and when she furtively placed it back on the table, she saw the Queen smiling at her.²⁷ Truss could not compete with either of them, ‘but it didn’t seem to trouble her: she just accepted it’, said an aide.

That evening, Truss went to Buckingham Palace for her first audience with the King. She knew him far less well than the Queen, and his passions, not least the environment and scepticism about unbridled growth, were not hers. But, according to an aide, ‘they hit it off at once’. Not naturally one to let others set the agenda, she opened up her first audience with the new monarch by gaily opining on planning policy and restrictions, which, according to her, proved ‘a topic in which they were both interested’. That evening at 6 p.m., a service of prayers and mourning was held at St Paul’s Cathedral.

Saturday 10 September saw the formal Accession Council at 10 a.m. at St James’s Palace, where again Truss played second fiddle, this time to the woman who all but wrested the leadership from her, Lord President of the Council Penny Mordaunt. It was she who invited the Clerk to the Privy Council to read the Accession Proclamation that pledges loyalty and

announced the King's regnal name, Charles III. The document was then signed by the King, Queen Camilla, the Archbishop of Canterbury and then the Prime Minister.²⁸ Mordaunt later spoke of her private apprehensions that 'it was not a foregone conclusion that the new monarch would be accepted. I felt a huge responsibility through the accession council.' Her particular worry was that the traditional three cheers might be half hearted. 'It was afterwards, when I went outside to hear the proclamation being delivered from the balcony and hear the crowds cheering their new king that I knew all would be well. And of course it was, an outpouring of love for both the late Queen and the whole royal family.'²⁹ In Mordaunt's own tribute, this time to Truss during her final Cabinet, she reflected back on these momentous days. She reminded fellow ministers that the work around the assessment of Britain's strategic position, the Integrated Review, published in 2021, had identified the passing of the Queen as a moment of peril for the nation; Truss had served the nation well in that respect 'by being at the helm when the transition happened and helping the nation grieve'.³⁰

Truss was assiduous over the days following the Accession. She attended events across the kingdom, notably services in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff. At the State Funeral in Westminster Abbey on Monday 19 September, she read the lesson from John chapter 14; 'What I worried about was not the reading itself, but "Will I trip up on the step?" Or "Which verger am I supposed to follow?"' she later said.³¹ A Prime Minister with more sense of history and personal gravitas might have expressed different sentiments.

The death of the Queen can be seen as a considerable hit to Truss's premiership. The loss of such a commanding and iconic figure as Elizabeth II had an impact, even if imperceptible, in creating uncertainty and unsettling people. The loss of ten working days just three days into her premiership meant Truss was unable to build momentum after her signature energy initiative. The initiative missed out on media commentary, much of which would have been positive. This might have been mitigated if she had listened to advice from Party Chair Jake Berry and Chief of Staff Mark Fullbrook to relaunch the package once the period of mourning was over.

The almost total dearth of commentary and reaction meant she was unable to learn from the inevitable backlash to her largesse. Officials felt that mourning thus denied her a reality check. ‘She needed a warning shot across her bows, a dose of financial reality,’ said one. ‘Do you think I’m going far enough?’ she asked an official the night before the Mini-Budget, who worried that she was losing touch with reality.

Cabinet did not meet again after 9 September until the official mourning period was over. ‘We lost any sense of Cabinet collectivity at that time,’ said Simon Clarke. Lost too were opportunities, badly needed, for her to bond with her MPs. Meanwhile, with nothing political to do, Truss focused on the Mini-Budget. ‘Liz was on fire, full of pent-up energy. She was frantically pushing supply-side reforms; the plans were not radical enough, they had to go further: why not more “investment zones”, why not more road projects, why can’t we go further? she kept asking. The sense was that Liz was moving ahead of the entire field,’ said a supportive Cabinet minister. Did ten days of enforced passivity, playing second fiddle to the Royal Family, members of her own Cabinet and officials get to her, making her even more assertive and strong willed? Quite possibly, given her character.

The suspension of normal life damaged the formation of new relationships and working patterns too in No. 10, an office like no other. Without normal job descriptions and chains of command, trust and personal contacts are all important. ‘No patterns of meetings were laid down and consolidated during this period,’ said a senior official, ‘and they never became embedded, till the final week, when it was too late.’ ‘The Queen’s death created an unnerving atmosphere: it made us more detached and cut off,’ said a senior Cabinet minister. For Truss, given to quirky working habits, the hiatus was particularly unfortunate: ‘Liz appeared much more keen on where everybody should be located than on the rhythm of regular meetings in No. 10,’ said an aide.

More damaging still was the lack of consultations that normally would have been held before an event as wide-ranging as the Mini-Budget. Friday 23 September was pencilled in for it, but for all the preceding week, Truss

was preoccupied with ceremonial activities. On Friday 16 September, her entire day was devoted to attending a service at Llandaff Cathedral in Cardiff, before returning late to a rushed ‘economy meeting’ in the Cabinet Room. Lackadaisical debates took place about whether the fiscal event should be shifted earlier to capitalize on the muted afterglow of the energy support package, or delayed until October after the annual party conference. But Truss would hear none of it. ‘We’ve had ten years of stagnation and no Conservative policies. We need shock and awe: we are not going to wait,’ she said.

The political pause also provided the opportunity, Truss realized too late, for supporters of Sunak to regroup. ‘Rishi had five former Chief Whips on his team working for him. It was all about power. They had seen their power base ripped away from them, and they were going to get it back,’ said a Truss whip.

Tensions flared up over invitations to the Queen’s funeral. Some senior Conservatives were angry not to have been included in the ‘more inclusive’ seat allocation, few more so than Gavin Williamson, who, as later quoted in the Independent Expert Panel report, messaged Chief Whip Wendy Morton to say ‘don’t forget I know how this works so don’t puss me about’, and ‘you are showing f**k all interest in pulling things together. Don’t bother asking anything from me’, and ‘let’s see how many more times you f**k us all over. There is a price for everything.’ Morton received the texts early in the mornings and, feeling intimidated by them, put in a complaint to CCHQ. When the messages were leaked in November, Williamson was forced to resign as a minister. The Independent Panel in September 2023 said he set out to make Morton’s position difficult and frustrate her as she adjusted to her new job in revenge for his perception that he and others had been denied seats because they were not supporters of the new Prime Minister.³² These exchanges indicate what was to follow before the premiership was over.

By the day of the Queen’s funeral, 19 September, Truss had just thirty-one days left before she terminated her own leadership.

The Verdict: Command the Big Events?

From her handling of the twin shocks she faced, Truss emerged as a plausible if not fully convincing figure. She was strong and decisive in her reaction to the energy crisis, where a more cautious approach could have caused widespread hardship, economic turbulence and likely U-turns. The markets, as expected, accepted the logic; the mistake came in their imagining they could expect the same reaction with the Mini-Budget fifteen days later.

Truss met the Queen's death with a lacklustre response that avoided glaring errors. She may have been the tenth Prime Minister to oversee the death of a monarch, but none previously had to manage it anything like as early in their premiership. Most had six years and more, including Walpole when George I died in 1727, and Lord Liverpool when George III died in 1820; while the most inexperienced were Wellington in 1830 when George IV died, and Asquith in 1910 with Edward VII.

But there was no seizing of the agenda as there had been with Asquith in 1910, no commanding of the national story like Baldwin in 1936, nor silken words to soothe a nation like Churchill in 1952. Indeed, it seemed almost that the office of Prime Minister had shrunk over the years, rather than becoming presidential as politics students are often told.

Truss acquitted herself well enough for the nation and her party to continue to suspend their judgement on her premiership. But she needed to prove that she could step up to the challenges of office. These first two shocks were beyond her control: it was her response to the third shock, which she herself engineered, that was to prove fatal to her premiership.



Rule Number Five: Prime Ministers need to be credible figures on the world stage. Truss never won the respect of world leaders, notably President Biden. At the UN General Assembly on 21 September

5

BE CREDIBLE AND HIGHLY REGARDED ABROAD

19–22 September 2022

Many of Britain's top Prime Ministers – Pitt the Younger, Palmerston, Disraeli, Lloyd George, Churchill, Thatcher included – were giants abroad as well as being formidable presences in Britain. Applause on one stage boosted the PM's standing on the other. Equally, it's difficult for a Prime Minister who is failing at home to have much credibility with their peers abroad. International top dogs are proud of belonging to their exclusive club and much prefer stars, not losers, at their table.

For that reason, foreign policy matters to prime ministerial standing more than we might think. We cannot understand a premiership, Truss's or any other, without reckoning on their mark in foreign lands.

Truss: a Foreign Policy PM?

Truss came into No. 10 better prepared for the foreign stage than most of her predecessors. Since 1964 and the era of jet diplomacy, many incoming PMs were low on foreign experience, including Wilson, Thatcher, Blair, Cameron and May. On arrival in Downing Street, they were not known on the world stage and lacked a background in foreign affairs. Few remedied the deficiency quicker than Blair: his first major international meeting, an EU summit in Amsterdam in his second month as PM, saw him wow other leaders both within the conference hall and outside.

Truss was one of four Prime Ministers since 1964 to have been Foreign Secretary before assuming the highest office, alongside Callaghan, Major and Johnson. She was delighted when Johnson, in the wake of the

withdrawal from Afghanistan fiasco in the summer of 2021, made her Dominic Raab's successor as Foreign Secretary, not least because of the prominence the job gave her on the international stage. She hoped this would allow her to outshine her competitors as Johnson's successor. Her views were inspired more by gut instinct than deep intellectual thought. As Adam Jones has noted, she saw the world in Manichean terms, the good guys against the bad. China and Russia were most certainly the latter, while the former was exemplified by the United States, perhaps best typified by the bond between Thatcher and Reagan at the time when Truss had come of political age. She was definitely not Trumpian: Reagan was the US President she most admired and sought to emulate. She was attracted to countries for their values. Democracies under threat from autocratic regimes, whether Israel, Taiwan or Ukraine, merited her ardent support and admiration.

Truss believed that Britain had a once in a generation opportunity post-Brexit. She imagined a new Britain on the world stage, just as she was to imagine a new Britain at home galvanized by her growth plan. As Foreign Secretary, she saw herself leading British attempts to play a pivotal role in supporting the liberal order. The AUKUS trilateral security agreement with the USA and Australia, happily announced on the day she became Foreign Secretary, was a totem of this. Underpinning her whole outlook was free trade, with like-minded countries clubbing together to protect their economic interests. 'Aid for trade' was her cause; she supported the cut in development spending to 0.5 per cent of national income in 2020 (from Cameron's 2013 commitment to 0.7 per cent).¹ Any human damage caused by these cuts was of no apparent concern to her.

Leading on Ukraine

The event that energized Truss the most during her political career was the Russian aggression against Ukraine. It involved the two countries she despised most: Russia and, eventually, China.

Ukraine, she sensed, was her Churchill, her Thatcher moment. The massive build-up of Russian troops on the Ukraine border in March and April 2021 while she had been Trade Secretary had excited her interest. By the time she became Foreign Secretary three months later, tensions had risen much higher, catalysed by Putin's open 'essay' in July 2021 claiming that Ukraine was historically part of Russia. That autumn she followed developments intensely, while focusing on completing her round of free-trade agreements. 'Liz always felt deep down that Putin intended to invade,' recalled an aide who remembers Truss being asked by an official in mid-February 2022 what she thought would happen: 'Putin has made up his mind to do it. It's not a case of if, but when,' she said decisively. Her battle was to convince foreign ministers across the EU who continued almost unanimously to believe that Putin was merely playing games in amassing troops on the border, trying to extract concessions.

As Foreign Secretary, she had been fighting a war not just against the Kremlin and the EU, but also, as we have seen, against Boris Johnson at No. 10 and Ben Wallace at the Ministry of Defence about who could appear the most hawkish. Johnson clung to the crisis as a life raft, leveraging the benefit the PM has in a crisis of becoming de facto Foreign Secretary themselves. In January 2022, Wallace, then the man best placed to succeed Johnson, had been responsible for sending light anti-tank missiles to Ukraine. That month, not to be outdone, Truss, as the minister overseeing MI6 and GCHQ, and in consultation with the US, released secret intelligence to show that Russia was intent on invading Ukraine. 'This was vital in waking up the EU to Putin's true intentions,' said a senior official. She had visited Moscow in early February for uncompromising talks with Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Sergey Lavrov, challenging his argument that Russia felt threatened. On 17 February, the day after Johnson himself ordered the release of intelligence to show Russian troop numbers were increasing on the borders, she visited Kyiv where she demanded Russia withdraw its forces from Ukraine's borders: 'Russian aggression... menaces our friends in Ukraine, and threatens security and stability for us all.'² The visits gave her opportunities for grandstanding. Photographs of her in

Moscow's Red Square in a black fur hat, and another on a tank in Estonia, were shared widely: one paper noted that there had been 700 Truss photographs released during her five months as Foreign Secretary, averaging four and a half a day.³ 'One hundred per cent calculated decisions,' said an aide. 'The position of Boris was getting a lot weaker all the time. Of course we were alert to it.'

Shortly before 5 a.m. Kyiv time on 24 February, Putin announced a 'Special Military Operation' to 'defend' the Russian-controlled breakaway republics in Eastern Ukraine. He said that Ukraine would be 'demilitarized' and 'denazified'. Within moments Russian missiles poured down on the country, and Russian forces attacked from the east, south and north. Truss was woken to be told the news, and immediately key staff were called in for a meeting in the Foreign Office. 'I will remember it to my old age,' said one. 'It was about 4 a.m. I had been expecting the call, so wasn't really asleep. This is the call neither of us wanted to be having: "There are cruise missiles over Kyiv. The Foreign Secretary has been told. She has asked that you come in at once."' Once in the office the team were briefed on possible responses, including sanctions and the confiscation of assets. The official predictions were bleak – that Ukraine would be rapidly defeated by the Russian juggernaut.⁴

What followed surprised everybody. Ukraine's armed forces were much better prepared than the Russians expected. Within days, the Russian advance on Kyiv had been halted, and then Putin's lightning strike against Ukraine's capital degenerated into military catastrophe. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy inspired the world with his defiance of Russia. Defeated, the Russian army withdrew from the outskirts of Kyiv and Ukraine's north, and concentrated on less ambitious and more easily supported objectives in Ukraine's south and east. Ukraine had endured the first round.

The invasion, close observers of Truss believe, produced a metamorphosis in her outlook. 'That was when we started noticing a different side to Liz. We saw papers in her boxes coming back with fewer comments. She became less involved in the process of government, and

more focused on the big picture. Suddenly, she was a figure of global importance,’ said an aide. “‘I know what I’m doing and I’m going to do it” became her default stance. She began not listening in the same way. By Easter 2022, it was clear we had a very different Liz.’

The speech she gave on 28 April at Mansion House calling for Russia to retreat to the pre-2014 borders, i.e. to relinquish Crimea which it had annexed that year, caused consternation in the White House. It briefed that it was irritated by her, and her hectoring request that the US increase its support for Ukraine (while not acknowledging that this was already many times what Britain contributed).⁵ A more measured leader would not have provoked Washington in this way.

As if Russia was not enemy enough for her, she opened up a second front on China. This played well in sections of the party she needed to win round, not least Iain Duncan Smith. Here was a subject too on which she could ‘out-Boris Boris’: as one of her team said, ‘there was always a sense that Boris hadn’t felt the anti-China thing in his bones like she did’, not least when he’d cosied up to Beijing as London Mayor. It provided the opportunity to put deep blue water between her and Sunak in the leadership election. At the end of August, with the last week of the campaign approaching, she let it be known that under her premiership, policy would be ‘reshaped’ and China would be designated as ‘a threat’ to national security of a similar status to Russia.⁶ The foreign policy establishment pooh-poohed the notion when they heard it. ‘It sounded very TV [worthy]. It didn’t really mean anything,’ said one. They waited to see whether it would amount to anything more than attention-seeking.

Of course, Truss was not alone in her views. Hardening attitudes to China were a feature of Western politics during the late 2010s. The election of Donald Trump in 2016 in the US had both demonstrated and sped up this trend, as did the Covid pandemic, for which some – not without reason – held Beijing responsible. It made sense – from a values-based perspective on foreign policy – to support democracy in Taiwan against autocracy in Beijing. But the darkening diplomatic climate saw China move closer to Russia and provide Moscow with much-needed equipment and technology

in its war on Ukraine. ‘China is the biggest enemy,’ she said later. ‘If Ukraine falls, it will give China a huge boost, which is right behind the war.’⁷ After she stood down as Prime Minister, she developed this thesis in her book *Ten Years to Save the West*.

Northern Ireland

It wasn’t just the brightest lights of great power politics that caught Truss’s interest. Northern Ireland was another matter on which she was keen to gain support. This time it was the ‘no-surrender’ ERG MPs she had in her sights.

The issue had been a sore in the party since long before the compromise solution of the Northern Ireland Protocol, stuck together by Johnson in 2019 to replace May’s ‘backstop’ to ensure Northern Ireland would remain aligned with the rest of the UK post-Brexit. For two years, inertia had reigned while hardline Brexit minister David Frost had been overseeing it. But possibilities for progress were suddenly opened up when he resigned from Johnson’s government the weekend before Christmas in 2021. Insiders saw this as a way of launching his own political career.⁸

Johnson alighted on the Foreign Secretary as the ideal figure to take on the matter. Truss had no delusions that the master schemer was offering it to her knowing it would be ‘a poisoned chalice’, a clever wheeze his team had concocted to trip up a rival whose star continued in the ascendant. Thoughts of finding the most skilled minister to clean up a dangerous mess partly of his own making never entered his head. Her team fully intended it would rebound against No. 10. Their rivalry reached a high point in March when a paper she had placed in his PM box was leaked to the *Sunday Telegraph*. The press report, which painted her as trying to stop Johnson from invoking Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol, provoked fury against her among Brexiteers.⁹ ‘It was not true, and they knew it. It was No. 10 making mischief so Johnson could be seen to be tougher on Northern Ireland than Liz, and good in the eyes of the right wing,’ said an aide. Truss was furious; ‘We’re not going to submit anything on paper to No. 10 ever again,’ she fumed. She stormed into No. 10 to see Johnson on Monday 28 March, the

day after the article appeared. ‘Right, we’re going to legislate on this, no compromises,’ she told the PM, one aide recalled. They agreed that any hope of support from the EU was forlorn, and from their deliberations emerged the hardline Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, which ground through the system until Johnson resigned in July, for her to pick up when she became PM.

Realizing the Brexit Vision

Truss despaired too of Johnson’s half-hearted approach to optimizing the freedoms of deregulation Brexit promised. She saw ‘investment zones’ as her way to get to Brexit nirvana. While planning at Chevening during the leadership campaign, the Treasury told her repeatedly that these zones wouldn’t generate any new investment, but merely suck investment away from neighbouring areas. ‘But she didn’t care if that was true or not. Her ambition was to create an overall appetite for low taxation and high investment to show that, once outside the EU, Britain can seize the advantages of deregulation,’ said an official.

Johnson, who had been one of the most visible figures among the Vote Leave movement in the 2016 referendum, had done little as Prime Minister to capitalize on the opportunities of Brexit. Truss, who had voted for Remain but now believed in Brexit, also did little to optimize the possibilities, though that was rather forced by circumstance and the brevity of her tenure.

Truss: the Foreign Secretary Prime Minister

Most PMs sooner or later become captivated by foreign policy. For Truss, this came sooner. The opportunities for grandstanding on the world stage; the pampering on flights; grand British embassies and international conferences; meetings at the White House or the Élysée Palace; the elixir of making important decisions, unshackled from the grungy reality and constraints of domestic politics all propel the Prime Minister upwards from

Heathrow or RAF Northolt. It can seem much easier to achieve things abroad than at home.

Some Prime Ministers appoint themselves Foreign Secretary, as did Salisbury and MacDonald. Others like Macmillan, Thatcher and Blair dwarfed their Foreign Secretaries. For Truss, she knew she would have a Foreign Secretary in James Cleverly who would do what she wanted. In the letter she presented to him on 6 September, she gave him seven priorities and nil surprises. Supporting Ukraine against Russia was first. Then came a renewed focus on the Indo-Pacific, meaning responding to China, with the instructions to ‘increase support to Taiwan’ perhaps the most striking, while taking on China’s Belt and Road initiative by cranking up British investment partnerships was another exhortation within that focus. Then came Northern Ireland, preventing illegal migration and supporting international development. As Foreign Secretary, she had morphed the Commonwealth Development Corporation into British International Investment to drive British investment in South Asia and Africa.¹⁰ The last two priorities were responding to international threats and boosting security partnerships. In these areas, Truss wanted Britain to be the primary European ally in NATO, to lead the international response to state threats and cyber security, to refresh the Integrated Review, strengthen long-term energy security and build a quantum computing partnership with the United States. In detail it certainly trumped Blair’s terse instruction to the incoming British ambassador to Washington Christopher Meyer back in 2001 to ‘get up the arse of the White House and stay there’.¹¹

‘Up the Arse of the White House’

Truss herself fulfilled Blair’s instruction, if not quite in the way he intended. She had seen several world leaders when they were in London for the Queen’s funeral and she was impatient to get to work on foreign issues. The annual UN General Assembly debate was to begin the next day. She was given the advice, not least by Catsaras, not to go herself, given that the Mini-Budget, the keystone of her premiership, was due three days later and

her presence was needed to finalize details (in her absence, she deputed Coffey to chair discussions).

The Prime Minister did not always attend the UN General Assembly: Cameron had missed it in 2010 and 2013. Folk memories in Whitehall of Chancellor George Osborne being in the US just before his botched March 2012 Budget were still in circulation. But Truss's political team said she should go, and she herself was anxious to have her planned bilateral with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on the Northern Ireland Bill. Approval was obtained from Buckingham Palace for her to leave straight after the funeral on Monday, still officially the mourning period; she departed still wearing black. She ended up seeing von der Leyen twice and she proved key to unblocking the impasse. Their meeting secured agreement for back channels to open up, and for ideas to be explored and tested. After the Mini-Budget momentum was lost, and it was left for Sunak to pick up the pieces. The result was the Windsor Framework of February 2023, a legal agreement between the UK and the EU to adjust the Northern Ireland Protocol, bearing more than a passing reference to the ideas that Truss had promoted the year before.¹²

Meeting President Biden was to be the other highlight of her two days in New York. He had first been elected to the US Senate in November 1972, over two years before she was born. Fiercely proud of his Irish roots, he was critical of her Brexit and Northern Ireland machinations: 'We can't allow the Good Friday Agreement that brought peace to Northern Ireland to become a casualty of Brexit,' he had tweeted in September 2020.¹³ Indeed, he and his administration regarded Brexit as a huge mistake. He viewed Truss sceptically as a know-nothing upstart. As Foreign Secretary, she had displayed little interest, for all her admiration of Reagan, in contemporary American politics or wanting to build relationships with US politicians. She further irritated the White House when, at the NATO summit in Madrid in June 2022, she had met a congressional delegation and was heard to be critical while venting her frustrations on US policy on Ukraine. Inevitably, it got back to Secretary of State Antony Blinken. 'The Democratic Administration was very, very conscious of foreigners stirring things up on

domestic politics and it went down badly,’ admitted a British official. Her frustrations with the Biden administration were no secret: she regularly complained that ‘We have worse trade terms with the US than with any other country.’

So all eyes had been on that all-important first conversation on 6 September between the new Prime Minister and Biden. It didn’t start well. Truss’s political team complained that the President kept her waiting for twenty-three minutes. After holding on for quarter of an hour, they started joking, ‘Perhaps he can’t find the Oval Office’, ‘Perhaps he doesn’t want to find the Oval Office’, and ‘He’s overslept’. ‘We were pretty cynical. We thought his lateness was power play,’ said one. ‘Not at all,’ said an old diplomatic hand later. ‘Frankly, the Americans are always late – so are the French. She might have taken it personally, but it happens all the time.’ When the President eventually came on the line, he congratulated her politely, but made it clear Northern Ireland was all he wanted to talk about. ‘He didn’t want to discuss free trade,’ said one of the team. Their initial call must have ranked at the bottom of all the congratulatory calls from US Presidents to new Prime Ministers since the special relationship kicked off in earnest in 1941. At the Queen’s funeral, protocol prioritizing the abundant number of Commonwealth guests resulted in Biden being placed in the fourteenth row, a fact eagerly leaped on by Trump, who wrote, ‘this is what happens to America in just two short years... No respect!... If I were president, they wouldn’t have sat me back there.’¹⁴ It wasn’t an auspicious start.

They met in person on 21 September, before Truss’s UN speech. The day before, he had tweeted, ‘I’m sick and tired of trickle-down economics. It has never worked. We’re building an economy from the bottom up and middle out.’¹⁵ This was seen in London as a direct criticism of Truss and her policies, all the harsher for coming the day after the funeral. They met in one of the bland UN bilateral rooms and flicked through the major points in an almost perfunctory way – there was no warmth or meeting of minds as they discussed Russia and Ukraine, China, and Iran. The Northern Ireland Protocol wasn’t discussed in any detail, and Truss continued to think the US

was unhelpful, but she did say that British defence spending would rise to 3 per cent of national income – a pledge she was ultimately unable to fulfil.¹⁶ Biden's final intervention on 16 October came nine days before she quit when, while insouciantly waiting for an ice cream in Oregon, he suggested to reporters he wasn't the only world leader to think her economic measures had been 'a mistake'.¹⁷ 'The President would never have uttered such words about a fellow leader if he had not thought that she was not long for this world,' said Kim Darroch, former British ambassador to the US.¹⁸ 'Biden's intervention was devastating and calculated,' said an insider. 'Outrageous', was Truss's verdict on his comment. 'He was very unhelpful frankly from the start, in favour of a high-tax Europe and high government spending.'¹⁹ There was, most unusually with a departing PM, no farewell call with the President after her resignation.

Her only other overseas trip as PM came on 6 October, when she flew to Prague for the inaugural meeting of the European Political Community (EPC), a forum that had been proposed by Macron earlier in the year to provide a platform for all forty-seven European political leaders (both EU and non-EU) to discuss common concerns. She requested that the name 'EPC' be changed so it was not reminiscent of the EEC, forerunner of the EU; she also called for a roundtable discussion on immigration, and asked if London could host the second meeting. As evidence of her poor international authority, she was successful on none of these.²⁰

Her last real intervention in foreign affairs came on a G7 video conference call on 11 October focusing on Ukraine. President Zelenskyy was also on the call. It was not his, but her, premiership that was crashing. She spoke about an 'increasingly desperate Putin' and said 'he is losing', comments that, though aligned with conventional analysis at the time, now seem both complacent and sadly optimistic. She said that she wanted the G20 meeting the following month to mobilize support from key G20 players, including India, Brazil and South Africa, to make it clear that they would not support any further escalation, and that any use of nuclear weapons by Putin would 'lead to severe consequences for Russia'. She was listened to carefully, if not with obvious respect.²¹

A final late flaring of her flame before it was extinguished came after the appointment of Jeremy Hunt as Chancellor. Hunt effectively became, on appointment, the domestic Prime Minister for as long as she remained. ‘She liked the idea that she would run foreign policy like Blair, leaving domestic policy to Hunt like Brown. For a few hours, at least, it seemed credible,’ said an official. The idea wasn’t entirely mad. She had laid out her store on foreign policy with admirable clarity, not least at her speech to the United Nations when she spoke of Britain’s post-Brexit mission ‘to champion freedom, sovereignty and democracy’. Not entirely mad, but certainly for the birds.

On the morning she returned to Britain from the UN, Thursday 22 September, she had just twenty-eight days till her resignation announcement.

The Verdict: Be Credible and Highly Regarded Abroad?

Truss’s aspiration to be Britain’s de facto Foreign Secretary (alongside de facto Chancellor) came to little. Ukraine was to be her flagship foreign policy; she wanted to be seen as ‘continuity Boris’, and even ‘turbo Boris’ in Kyiv and beyond. But even on her call with Zelenskyy on her first day in No. 10, it was clear that the chemistry wasn’t there, and that the Ukrainian leader was still uncomprehending about why she had taken the place of his beloved Boris. (‘You’re a hero,’ Johnson had said to Zelenskyy on their final emotional call. ‘No, *you’re* a hero,’ the Ukrainian leader said back to him.)²² She planned to visit Kyiv shortly after the Mini-Budget, but the subsequent nosedive meant ‘everything was off the table with the trip’, as an aide said. By that point, the ongoing political crisis meant that she could not be away from London and out of communication long enough to facilitate a secret journey of that kind. She was therefore unable to share in the glory of the major Ukrainian breakthrough and victory near Kharkiv that began on her first day in power. She rued that so little credit fell on her.

Truss had several of the qualities needed by a Prime Minister on the foreign stage. Unlike some PMs, she was good on intelligence and reading

reports, which her team brought to her by hand rather than putting in her box. She dealt well with a couple of alerts where RAF planes were scrambled to intercept unidentified or unresponsive aircraft in British airspace. She had a clear agenda on Ukraine, Northern Ireland and China, and wanted to bring to fruition her long-term gas plan with Norway. She was working with Macron, despite her campaign gaffe of saying ‘the jury is out’ on whether he was a ‘friend or foe’. Ultimately, she developed a generally positive relationship with him, including plans for Anglo–French cooperation on nuclear power stations.²³ She had plans for building on her relationship with Australia (her strongest overseas relationship, albeit one damaged when the Liberal–National Coalition lost power). In addition to her visit to Kyiv, she had a trip to India slated for 7–9 November, and a British–Irish Council meeting in Blackpool on 10–11 November. The following week, she was due to return to Bali for the G20 where her premiership had first become a possibility. On her return she was due to visit South Africa for three days, before going to Montréal for COP15 in December.

None of this was to transpire. Rather than being seen as a heroic leader on the world stage, she was seen as a curiosity, an aberration who led a country desperate to find, but ultimately failing to achieve, a respected independent voice, post-Brexit. Worse, the reaction to the Mini-Budget damaged the perception of Britain as a stable, predictable and dependable country in foreign capitals, though it seems fair to say that the brevity of Truss’s tenure limited that damage. The relationship with the US President had sunk to the lowest level since Eden in 1956, and hard work was needed after her departure to restore trust, as it was to re-establish confidence in Britain in other overseas capitals. One senior Foreign Office figure felt that perceptions of the UK had returned to ‘normal’ within a few months.

It’s hard to reach any conclusion other than she failed to meet the fifth test of premiership: to be a credible leader of Britain abroad.



Rule Number Six: The Prime Minister needs the right character and a willingness to learn on the job. Truss was unwilling to learn or to accept she had anything to learn. Here in the Commons on 23 September

6

LEARN HOW TO BE PRIME MINISTER

The story so far is not without cause for concern – the shallowness of Truss’s support and her provocative Cabinet selection prominent among them – but the positives perhaps outweighed these: a decisive response to the energy price crisis, unobtrusive leadership following the death of the Queen, and a competent start on the world stage. We have seen little to suggest, on the surface at least, that within just twenty-seven days she would have thrown in the towel. Can clues be found in her character?

‘Prime Ministers need three qualities,’ an adviser remembered her saying. ‘Charisma, vision and implementation. Boris had the first, I have the second and Rishi had the third.’ There is an element of truth in that, as well as self-knowledge. But we need to probe deeper. Because character matters. The qualities that are needed to get the incumbent into Downing Street – charisma, appearance and communication skills – are not necessarily the same as those required to make a success of the job once inside. Sometimes, the very qualities that take a politician to the top, including political pugnacity, tribalism, populism, egotism and economy with the truth, undermine them once in Downing Street.

Truss had breezed her way up through the ministerial ranks. The question was, how would this highly impulsive politician cope when she no longer had anyone above her to push back?

Truss’s Positive Character Traits

To dismiss Liz Truss as always destined to fail at No. 10 is too simplistic and does not help us understand the task of the modern Prime Minister, or specifically what went wrong in her premiership. She had some of the qualities successful Prime Ministers need. They are not always the qualities

that we might presume. We cannot understand her premiership in isolation but only through the lens of the experience of other Prime Ministers, successful and otherwise. It takes time for PMs to display their full abilities. True, she had just forty-nine days in office. But there is no evidence that she was willing to learn from history or from advice. She knew best.

Those Prime Ministers who have succeeded in the modern era, like leaders in all fields, have needed to be *optimists*. Truss most certainly was. She spoke repeatedly in public and private about how she was going to be the leader to reverse ten years and more of national decline, possessing an almost messianic belief in her ability to achieve it where others had fallen short. She exuded positivity from every pore. Her irrepressible optimism was perhaps her most winning trait. But to bring about national transformation required more than self-belief and drive from the top. Prime Ministers need to temper optimism with realism. Churchill, while never communicating his doubts about ultimate victory in the Second World War, never ceased to remind the country about the toll it would take. Blair and Cameron were, in contrast, overly optimistic about the extent of the change they could deliver at home and abroad. They might well have achieved more with realism and graft. Johnson's boosterist optimism and habit of playing to the gallery were substitutes for putting in the hard yards and carrying his Cabinet with him.

'Liz was prone to taking up positions and championing them without thinking through the consequences,' one former Cabinet minister noted. She repeated the same mistake in No. 10, not thinking through the risks and consequences of her growth plan. Optimism is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for a successful Prime Minister. Truss ultimately failed because she never managed to enthuse her MPs with her optimistic vision nor exercised sufficient caution. Some just thought her manner and plans plain bonkers. Rather admirably, if a little eccentric, she retained her optimism right to the very end. Seldom has a Prime Minister been happier after they knew the game was up. 'She radiated positivity in her final days, as if she was almost happy it was over,' said an aide.

No job in Britain bears more responsibility or is more relentlessly demanding than that of Prime Minister. Without boundless *energy*, and a strong physical constitution, Prime Ministers underachieve. They will be woken during the night when their ever-watchful Private Office deems a crisis in Britain or globally merits it. They need to be awake before 6 a.m. to spend an hour or more going through papers in their overnight box, and they are often at work at their desk by 7 a.m. Living above the job, as the No. 10 flat allows, can be a boon. They may have flown home overnight, as Truss did from New York on the morning of Thursday 22 September after the UN General Assembly, to be whisked by police outriders into Downing Street, but they're straight back into work, with meetings, briefings and public appearances throughout the day. No chance for a catnap. Prime Ministers have too little time set aside for exercise, resting and reading, and evening engagements spent schmoozing will mean they're rarely back up in the flat before 10 p.m., with papers having accumulated for them to read through.

Ultimately, Johnson's lack of effort undermined confidence in him, but no one had such concerns about Truss's energy, even after eight punishing weeks on the campaign trail. Officials described how 'she would take great trouble with her boxes, would read the papers, was very iterative, quite geeky with a pronounced policy mindset'. After three years of her shamolic predecessor, they were delighted to have someone who promised to be more businesslike back on the bridge. She put more thought into how to structure No. 10 than many others. Her promise, made in her leadership acceptance speech, that 'we will deliver, we will deliver and we will deliver' was not idle: she put great effort into planning the first thirty days, the first hundred days and beyond. Her many critics in the party might not have liked her personally, or her policies, but few felt she was lacking the serious intent required for the job.

At forty-seven, Truss was arguably the right age: she'd gained plenty of experience but was young enough for her energy levels and health to be undiminished. Aged forty-two, Sunak was certainly too young, as were Blair and Cameron at forty-three: all would have been better Prime

Ministers if they had more life experience. Gladstone, conversely, was clearly too old when he came back at eighty-two in 1892 for his final period in office. More recently, Jim Callaghan was sixty-four when he became PM in April 1976: no longer the firebrand he once was, he paced himself well, never having late meetings and calling out to his Private Office 'I'm going up now' at sensible times in the evening. He told one aide that he had a duty to keep fit, 'just as an athlete keeps himself fit'.¹ Illness dogged many PMs impeding their energy and effectiveness, including three in a row in Churchill, Eden and Macmillan. Woe betide any Prime Minister who looks tired or is unwell: nothing starts tongues wagging like an ailing or fatigued premier.

Truss was almost preternaturally healthy, ate sensibly and was rarely unwell. She liked her white wine for sure. Witnesses testified, though, that she was often 'high' on caffeine from her beloved double espressos. But there is no evidence, as there was with other PMs like Rosebery (morphine) and Eden (Drinamyl), that her judgement was impaired by stimulants and drugs. In her memoir, she wrote that she had, in an echo of Rosebery, suffered insomnia, lying awake counting quarter-hours as they chimed on the nearby Horse Guards clock.²

Did the extreme stress of the final days in No. 10 cause a breakdown of sorts? Certainly her mood was extremely volatile. She later described the press conference announcing Kwarteng's sacking as like 'officiating at my own funeral' and listening to Hunt's statement in the Commons as an 'out of body experience [and] uniquely painful'.³ One of her advisers said that 'she knew that she had f***ed up, and that made it so hard on a human level, to watch someone go through that'. They commented that in those last few days she became 'unhinged', stubborn and angry. She was certainly swamped and politically overwhelmed. But there is no evidence of an incapacitating breakdown. She responded calmly to a security incident on 12 October when a commercial aircraft was causing concern and an alert was issued (the incident was resolved without action). She also came to accept her own political mortality rather quicker than some other PMs.

Neither her colleagues nor her team could cavil at her ability to *work hard* and keep ahead of the job. Word soon spreads if the Prime Minister is not on top of their paperwork, properly briefed for meetings, or appears at a loss in public. The Private Office and team around them in Downing Street are vital to ensure that the PM's time is optimally used each day. Any Prime Minister is only ever as good as their official team, which is why they need to have the very best principal private secretary available, as Truss had in Nick Catsaras (albeit one lacking Treasury experience, and whose advice to appoint a No. 10 permanent secretary who did have it she shunned). The PM's margins are so tight, their time so pressured and the damage from mistakes so unforgiving that without the very best team, they fall down. While not matching the boundless work levels of Thatcher, Truss met the standards for shouldering the Prime Minister's burden of red boxes and exhaustive paperwork. Hard work was not the issue, though typically she was very selective in where she focused her attention.

Nor was there a want of *high intelligence*. While not an intellectual, nor possessing the first-class academic mind of a Clement Attlee (a former lecturer at LSE), Harold Wilson (an academic at Oxford) or Gordon Brown (a PhD, lecturer and author), she was more than bright and sharp enough for the job. 'Analytical, quick and intelligent, if not profound', was the verdict of Hammond who had worked with her closely at the Treasury.⁴ One of many unwelcome surprises for incoming Prime Ministers is the almost limitless range of topics that they need to master, and the speed at which they have to do so.

Prime Minister's Questions is merely the most visible way in which they are challenged and probed under the merciless eye of television cameras and fellow MPs. She passed her first PMQ test comfortably, but she lacked the fleet of foot of a figure like Blair or Cameron, and her final PMQs on Wednesday 19 October was a fiasco. Searching questions by journalists would often catch her out, not so much because she didn't understand the question but more that she was trying too hard to calculate the response. Her reading was broad rather than deep and was in narrow and self-confirmatory waters. She lacked the intellectual confidence to have

her ideas challenged, and would seek out affirmation rather than challenge or contradiction. In her defence one might say predecessors who saw too much of the other side of an argument, such as the intellectual Lord Rosebery and Arthur Balfour, didn't always make decisive Prime Ministers. But her single-mindedness was obtuse and became progressively so in No. 10: insiders noted how impatient she became with any questioning, how she would increasingly swear, with her language scattered with the F-word.

The flip side of this was that the Prime Minister needs to be *decisive*, and Liz Truss most certainly could be. She displayed that quality in defining her agenda, choosing her Cabinet, and then changing the direction and her Chancellor when under intense fire. It may have been wrong to have done so, but no one could say she was incapable of taking tough decisions. May and Sunak in contrast struggled at times to say 'enough: this is what we will do'. Brown did too, as in the decision in the autumn of 2007 on whether to call an early general election. Johnson in his most effective period as Prime Minister, his first six months stewarded by Dominic Cummings from July to December 2019, was decisive on many occasions, including prorogation and the decree in September 2019 to expel twenty-one moderate Conservative MPs for voting against a 'no deal Brexit'. But after his election victory in December 2019, and especially after Cummings left, Johnson's decisiveness collapsed disastrously until he found a cause in Ukraine.

All leadership is lonely, but none more so than heading up a country. 'You want a friend in Washington?' President Truman asked on the election trail in 1948. 'Then get a dog.' Truss didn't have a dog. But she had what all the top tier Prime Ministers have benefited from in Downing Street: a *strong family base*. She had an unfailingly loyal and supportive spouse in Hugh O'Leary, an accountant, who, as with Denis Thatcher and Philip May with their respective wives, judged his own all but impossible job to perfection, supporting but not intruding. Unsubstantiated stories circulated in high places and low, sometimes egged on by her political opponents, of her personal life. During the leadership campaign, she was grilled intensely until her staff were satisfied that there was no substance to the allegations.

Suspensions of her phone being hacked by Russia's intelligence agency, the FSB, led to two changes of device. During an inquisition she was asked whether there was anything on the phone she should be worried about; but there was nothing untoward bar some periodic playful if harmless messages, as was her style. What is known to be true is her affair with fellow MP Mark Field, which became public knowledge fifteen years before she became Prime Minister.⁵ But it did not stop her resumption of a happy and close marriage. In moments of high pressure in No. 10, she would often say 'I'm just going upstairs to talk to Hugh', without doubt her closest confidant. Little commented upon, she managed to also be a loving and devoted mother to her two daughters, a huge challenge for any top level politician.

Truss could be *politically savvy*. Prime Ministers who are not, like Eden, Heath and Sunak, can stumble. They need to be able to read the political room better than others, or at least to listen to those who have a better political nose than them where they don't. 'Liz had tremendous political skills and saw quicker than any other in the team who was stuffed and who would make it,' said Stein.⁶ She calculated that it would be better to stick with Johnson during the July 2022 crisis, rather than join her colleagues in resigning, which enabled her to become his heir. She had negotiated the turbulent waters of Brexit, shaking off her Remainer credentials, to become the standard bearer for Brexit. Her political antennae on her journey upwards could be peerless. Only once entombed in the catacomb of No. 10 did she fully lose her touch. Ultimately, the savviness was micro and self-centred when it needed to be macro and inclusive: she never really understood either the job or the country she now led. A savvier Prime Minister, like Blair after the death of Princess Diana, would have sensed the opportunity after the death of the Queen to reach out to the whole nation.

Being willing to *take advice* is another necessary prime ministerial quality, and knowing *who to trust*. Surprisingly, perhaps, given she was such a strong personality and working in a Whitehall rife with abrasive special advisers, the people she chose tended to be courteous and mild-

mannered. Thérèse Coffey as her DPM and Wendy Morton as her Chief Whip could indeed be criticized for being insufficiently daunting or tough. Her special adviser team was populated by people who were bright, smart and loyal. She didn't repeat Johnson's mistake of ditching those who had served her before Downing Street and substituting them with hard-nosed bruisers. The reason it happened with Johnson is instructive: he was known to be so weak and ineffectual he needed strong minders to keep him on track. Truss was not like that.

With the exception of the sacking of Tom Scholar, and despite her well-known criticisms of the civil service establishment, she trusted her officials, including, initially at least, figures such as Simon Case who were relatively new to her. She readily accepted advice on the Queen's funeral arrangements, as she did on how to change direction after the Mini-Budget meltdown. She found, though, in common with all other Prime Ministers, that the speed of operation of No. 10 made it difficult to know whose advice to trust, and she very quickly found herself caught up in a bubble, without the time to reason matters through with her trusted team.

No relationship has caused Prime Ministers more anguish than that with their Chancellors. The PM needs to be able to *work harmoniously* with them and all their senior ministers, and this Truss mostly did. The departmental objectives she presented each Cabinet minister with came with the instruction that she did not want to interfere unduly. Most post-war PMs had difficulty at some time with their Chancellors, Churchill with R.A. Butler (1951–55) and Cameron with Osborne (2010–16) being among the exceptions. Truss managed to demote her inherited Chancellor, Zahawi, and park him contentedly into his new berth, while working relatively well with his two successors, Kwarteng and then Hunt. She enjoyed good relationships with some others including Foreign Secretary Cleverly, though relations with her DPM Coffey became fraught, as they were from day one with her leadership rivals Braverman, Mordaunt and Badenoch. There was of course little time for relationships to sour, as inevitably they do around the Cabinet table, but she showed some promise at handling relationships in the brief period she was there.

The Prime Minister needs to display *moral seriousness* and a sense of mission, which Truss most certainly did. There can be no doubting her sincerity or determination to do what she thought was right for the country. Prime Ministers who lack these attributes learn that their indecision soon characterizes their whole government.

To the surprise of many contemporaries, Truss showed some promise too on a final character quality required for the office, *acting with dignity*, although her rudeness in gracelessly not acknowledging Sunak when the results of the leadership election were declared on Monday 5 September was a worrying start. Aware that she had a reputation as a leaker, she made moves to ensure that she herself would lead a confidential and collegiate government that revived the doctrine of collective responsibility. Too many Prime Ministers have been obsessed by the demands of the media cycle. ‘She wanted her premiership to be strategic, not tactical and day-to-day,’ said an official. ‘She took it to the other extreme, and refused to let it impinge on her premiership,’ said Fullbrook: one day, she even announced, ‘We’re not having newspapers in the office any more.’⁷ During the Queen’s mourning and funeral period she made no attempt to upstage the Royal Family, and she was never more statesmanlike than in the manner of her departure and the arrangements she made for the succession. She performed often well and appropriately in public, if never spectacularly, all the way through to her final speech on 25 October at the conclusion of her premiership. At times, towards the end, she appeared to find almost superhuman self-belief and gall in putting on a positive face when her premiership was crashing to the ground.

Subsequently, though, with her triumphalism and refusal to acknowledge mistakes after she ceased to be PM, she reverted to type.

Truss’s Character Shortfalls

None of the fifty-eight incumbents, not even the most successful, have had a complete set of prime ministerial skills. Some of the most adept, like Palmerston and Lloyd George, have also been the most flawed. So we

should not expect Liz Truss to display all the character virtues required, let alone in her very brief premiership. Many of the best have been highly idiosyncratic too, including Walpole, Gladstone, Salisbury and Churchill. Her flaws in character and skills nevertheless take us a long way to understanding the premature and cataclysmic end of her premiership.

First up, the Prime Minister must be able to set out and communicate their stall. That is the whole point of the job. But *public speaking* was never a strength. While some of the top tier Prime Ministers such as Disraeli, Gladstone, Lloyd George and Churchill were exceptional orators, many, including Attlee and Thatcher, could be quite wooden. Given her thin support among MPs Truss badly needed to be able to talk in public in a way that won their sympathy and support. But her appearances before the 1922 Committee, in Parliament and at the annual party conference failed to connect with or inspire her audience. Disenchantment with her rapidly grew as a result.

All successful Prime Ministers need to be, even when not natural speakers, *good storytellers*. They need to be good teachers or explainers to the nation at large about the challenges they face, and what they're trying to do. Gladstone, Attlee and Thatcher all communicated a narrative that threaded their policies together and illustrated what their leadership could bring. One of the best was Stanley Baldwin, who mastered the radio as a tool of communication, and used it to communicate his vision of a reassuring stability during the uncertainty of the 1920s and 1930s.

Truss found it hard to manage that and difficult to persuade those beyond her immediate constituency of her cause. She lacked charm and had none of Blair's persuasive appetite to sway sceptics, as he did before and after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. She did not convince others that she was the heir to Thatcher, least of all when Sunak and every other candidate was claiming the same mantle. She was better at persuading people to join in common cause against others, expressly the 'unity candidate' against Sunak, than she was at gaining genuine converts to her own platform. So, when the common enemy evaporated, to the extent he ever did, she was exposed.

The Prime Minister needs a *steady temperament*. This cannot suddenly be acquired in Downing Street, which soon exposes every last character flaw of the incomer. Impulse control and maturity, especially in the face of people advocating risky actions, is a quality they must possess. Baldwin, Attlee and Macmillan were the ultimate ‘steady hands’ at the tiller in the mid-twentieth century, while in their different ways, Major, Blair and Cameron exemplified the quality more recently. At the heart of this attribute is that the greater the pressure becomes in a crisis, the more focused, not more panicky, they become. Their coolness fortifies the Cabinet and the wider government. Psychological security and maturity is vital because the Prime Minister has to be the most grown-up person in the room. Too often in those final thirty-two days, Liz Truss was not. ‘Liz became very irritable, paranoid and even unhinged: she knew that she had f**ked up, which made it worse for her,’ said an aide. After the Mini-Budget backfired, she would be angry with her staff. ‘She’s shouting at everyone – at aides and officials – that “we’ve got to somehow find the money”’, said one witness. ‘When we tell her “it can’t be done”, she shouts back, “It’s not true. You’ve got to find it.”’ ‘Some Prime Ministers were brittle, like Eden and Brown. But Liz took it to a whole new level. She simply wasn’t suited to the job,’ concluded Kwarteng.⁸

The Prime Minister must be *generous* and *inclusive*. She fell down more completely on this than in any other single area. Her decision that there were to be only ‘true-believers’ (true-believers in what?) fatally undermined her government. Divide and rule was her philosophy. It may have worked before Downing Street, but it certainly didn’t once in the building.

Prime Ministers must have *iron self-control*. But Truss never mastered her inner demons. The two months of the leadership election ‘was like a hot house’, recalled one of her team. ‘It took a massive toll on everybody physically and emotionally.’ Once in No. 10 she drove herself and her team to almost absurd limits of endurance. ‘She took an almost perverse pleasure in denying herself sleep and her team sleep,’ lamented one.

Prime Ministers need to build close, high-performing and loyal teams in No. 10, as Blair and Cameron did so conspicuously. Her team-building skill

was totally absent. Even senior Cabinet ministers like Kwarteng, Philp and Clark could be treated with contempt and humiliated in public. She regularly told her personal staff to ‘shut up’ or simply blanked them. She had little awareness of social space, and she could be unpleasantly caustic in her sense of humour. Her team would regularly feel that she was talking behind their backs and playing one off against the other. ‘Divide and rule was the method, she never said sorry, and hardly ever said thank you,’ recalled an aide. ‘While Dominic Raab was unpleasant to everyone when he was Foreign Secretary, Liz would pick out individuals,’ said an observer.

All Prime Ministers have had outlier personalities – you have to be a bit unusual to want the role – but hers was one of the oddest. ‘She’s hard work to be with. You can’t sit and have a conversation with her. She doesn’t emote,’ said one of her close Cabinet ministers. ‘Liz never understood Cabinet, or that collective responsibility is a two-way street,’ said Mordaunt. ‘Politics is a team sport, and she never understood that.’⁹ On an individual level, she was not skilful at building personal relationships with MPs and key stakeholders, as Prime Ministers need to do. Outside her immediate family, friends were almost totally lacking; Coffey, Morton and Chloe Smith (whom she appointed as Coffey’s successor at Work and Pensions) were rare exceptions. ‘No one used the word “autism”,’ said one of her ministerial colleagues. ‘But it’s what we were thinking – her reluctance to engage with people, her fixation on precise numbers, and her unpredictability when the s**t hits the fan.’ Before No. 10, she outsourced her emotional intelligence in particular to Jarvis and Porter, but the filter fell away when she became PM.

‘She’s totally, totally full of self-belief,’ said one observer. ‘A symptom of her processing difficulties was that she didn’t see the world as others saw it, and had difficulty understanding why her views and proposals were not immediately taken up,’ said another. ‘Years of frustration, as she saw it, of being talked down to and dismissed as a female politician and as a minister gnawed away deep inside her. She hated people not taking her and her ideas seriously. I suspect that over the years, there was a great swelling of anger and resentment, building up in her mind against people mocking her. So

when she had the opportunity of ultimate power, it was payback,’ said a senior Cabinet minister. Payback came in her speech at the party conference on 5 October. ‘I know how it feels to have your potential dismissed by those who think they know better’, was a line proposed by a speechwriter that made the final cut. ‘I love it! – It’s a massive f**k you. It’s great. It’s kind of deeply true,’ she told her team, adding, ‘It’s a bit too honest.’ By now, she was venting her full feelings. ‘It’s basically a class-related issue as well. That’s the other reason people call me “stupid”, “mad”. Public schoolboys!’ Then a pause and a rare moment of self-reflection: her staff came largely from these schools. ‘Forgive me... I don’t dislike *all* public schoolboys.’

The most essential quality that every Prime Minister must possess is *judgement*. She had the self-awareness to know that she might not be ready for the job; indeed, that she might never be ready for it. But she never appreciated that she lacked the elusive quality of judgement, i.e. of people, of timing, and how decisions would be received. As Prime Minister, without even understanding or acknowledging the need for judgement, she was reckless. ‘Earlier in her career, she always had a boss above her. In No. 10, there was no one to rein her in, and she couldn’t cope with it,’ said an official. Only when it became impossible for her to continue with the Mini-Budget decisions did she listen to advice; by then, her premiership was effectively over.

Prime Ministers need to understand the limitations of the job; they need to *delegate* and trust those they have appointed. Truss’s instincts were right before she came into No. 10: she wanted her team to be small, like she remembered Cameron’s as being; she wanted to be the chair rather than the chief executive; she wanted to rely on her Deputy Prime Minister to oversee the details; and she wanted to trust her departmental ministers to execute the plans she had given them. These good intentions quickly crumpled in the frenzy of ultimate power. ‘Fundamentally, Liz misunderstood the job of Prime Minister. It’s not to be the policy chief or driver, but instead to set the direction and support others doing the work,’ said one aide. The moment she came in, she asked her staff to ‘clear her diary’ as she had done at the Foreign Office. ‘I’m not going to do this. I’m not going to do that,’ she

would say. Officials were soon tearing their hair out telling her, ‘But Prime Ministers have to do ABC or see XY and Z.’ ‘Why? I’m not going to do it,’ she replied flatly. So meetings were missed with key people at home and abroad. Her team recalled her spending days after the Mini-Budget sitting in the Cabinet Room trying to drive everything herself. ‘Action this day,’ she said like Churchill during the Second World War. ‘I want everything now, five minutes ago,’ she would demand. But it left no time for the necessary political, administrative and legal checks. ‘We’ve got to do this *now*. The general election is only two years away. We need to deliver now,’ she repeatedly said.

‘Liz was not good enough to manage No. 10 and be CEO. No one could tell her. She always felt she knew the answer. She would arrive at meetings telling people what she wanted. We were the executors and she was giving us instructions,’ said an aide. This trait was fortified by her partial reading of Thatcher’s premiership, as we have already seen. ‘She liked the fact that Thatcher would say what she thought at the beginning of the meeting,’ said Hammond. ‘Liz would say, “I think we should do this,” and then she wouldn’t listen to what others said. But Thatcher did listen, and had the confidence to absorb contrary viewpoints,’ he concluded.¹⁰

She failed in two final ways. Prime Ministers have to be able to *understand nuance* and to see shades of grey. But her world view was totally black and white. ‘Reagan and free markets good; most other politicians and most other things bad,’ said an official. Finally, they must have a sense of *tempered egoism*. Most PMs are relentlessly egotistical, and sacrifice family, colleagues and friends for power. But her vanity, neediness and willingness to trample over others was of Johnsonian proportions.

The Verdict: Learn How to Be Prime Minister?

Truss’s very considerable character flaws swamped her qualities, above all having a much clearer purpose than the other four Prime Ministers in the fourteen years of Tory rule. She did set the agenda. She did use her preparatory time before No. 10 to prime her ministers. But she didn’t do her

homework or alter course until it was too late. And then she was finished. Why? Because in the final analysis, she lacked the single most important quality a Prime Minister needs: *judgement*. Yet not even her greatest enemy expected it to implode within twenty-seven days. So what happened?



Rule Number Seven: Avoid major policy failures. Kwarteng delivering his budget speech on Friday 23 September

7

AVOID MAJOR POLICY FAILURES

23 September–2 October 2022

Policy failures and reversals *on the way up* do not stop an ambitious politician from becoming Prime Minister. After all, many Prime Ministers sat as a minister in a previous and, most likely, defeated government. But major errors *in office* are a totally different matter.

Gladstone's last ministry of 1892–94 was unable to pass Home Rule for Ireland, and once the Lords had rejected the measure, his eventual departure was inevitable. Thatcher never recovered from her unpopular poll tax policy in 1989 and was out of office the following year, nor did Major restore his authority fully after Britain's ejection from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in September 1992 on Black Wednesday. Blair's position was never the same after the widely criticized invasion of Iraq in 2003. Cameron chose to jump before his position became untenable following the defeat of his Remain side in the Brexit referendum in June 2016. After May's Brexit deal was defeated in early 2019, her authority steadily diminished to nothing before the axe fell.

Truss's Bold Economic Vision

Not since Thatcher had a Conservative Prime Minister believed so deeply in a small state, economic growth, cuts in government spending, lower taxes, supply-side reform and deregulation. After Thatcher fell in November 1990, Major had not been able to achieve these goals, neither had Cameron, May or Johnson. Indeed, to the disillusion of many Tory voters and MPs, and not just on the right of the party, they had not even seriously tried.

Few Tories could question her conviction. Again and again on the campaign trail, she articulated that vision. No one could have been in any doubt about what she planned to do, or how she planned to do it. It was her vision, her insights, her passion and her method. Others encouraged and emboldened her, none more so than her old friend Mark Littlewood, but no one gave her these thoughts.

All her ambitions for the economy were brought together in the 'Departmental Priorities Letter' she presented to Kwarteng once in office. The mission was unambiguous: 'Driving up trend GDP growth to 2.5 per cent a year' was her first instruction. 'You should be radical and establish an immediate two-year plan, supported by a medium-term plan, to boost UK productivity and ...increase trend growth,' she said. To assist this, the Bank of England mandate 'should be reviewed'. Next, he should 'reform the supply side to increase business investment, innovation, and growth', noting that the largest barriers to achieving this are 'excessive state regulation and insufficient investment'. The policy of new 'investment zones' with bold tax breaks was said to be fundamental to increase growth locally.

She charged Kwarteng next with 'reducing the overall tax burden on businesses and households', which she described as 'the government's mission'. This would entail implementing her campaign pledges to reverse the National Insurance increase, cancel the scheduled rise in corporation tax and provide for a temporary moratorium on green levies. She said she would be writing to him subsequently for 'a review of [the] UK tax system' that he would oversee. Next, he was to 'turbocharge the City', which she said was hampered more by EU legislation than any other area of British life; it was in need of drastic deregulation, and stimulus to ensure that it retained its long-term status as 'the world's leading financial centre'. Prudence, she said, was going to be a watchword for them: 'I will lead a fiscally responsible government that scrutinizes every pound of spending for the taxpayer.' She exhorted him to work closely with Chief Secretary to the Treasury Simon Clarke in order to control public spending, while reviewing the Treasury's rules to ensure spending decisions really did

stimulate investment across the UK. Finally, ‘You should implement a review of the mortgage market with a focus on first time buyers.’

Had a Prime Minister ever given such precise and comprehensive orders to a Chancellor? Certainly not in modern times. There could be no doubt in this premiership who the Chancellor was really going to be.

Warnings Unheeded: 6–22 September 2022

From the moment she realized she would win the leadership, nothing was going to stop her. ‘Liz was the driver. The economy was always going to be the focus of her premiership. It was all about “letting Liz be Liz”,’ said one adviser. Three deep forces were driving her on: a manic urgency about there being only two years to the general election, and everything needing to be done now; the populist and even reckless streak in her that actively relished the bravado and risk; and rage against the establishment, bordering on paranoia. The ‘blob’ was out to stop her and all she was trying to do; it was almost exclusively peopled by public school men who had patronized her and belittled her, and she was going to slay it. After she left No. 10, she implied that the ‘blob’ had not warned her of the risks in what she was doing.¹ The deep mistrust explains why she didn’t try to prepare the markets, the financial community and the economic establishment at large for what was coming, nor to try to enlist their support and understanding. Why not? To her, they were associated with failure, and irredeemably beyond the pale. ‘She felt that politicians were no longer in charge of running the UK, but [that instead it was] faceless people in the OBR, the Bank of England and the Treasury with completely different views to her on what was best for the country in terms of tax cuts and promoting growth,’ said Mark Fullbrook.²

But why the urgency? The economic outlook in late 2022 was sluggish indeed. Growth had been slow in 2022, and had fallen during the second quarter (the last period for which figures were available before she became PM), while growth for 2023 was predicted as, at best, 0.2 per cent, with a recession more than likely, according to analysis by professional services

firm PwC.³ On top of that, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had put considerable pressure on energy supplies, raising energy prices and causing wider market discomfort. The cost of living created widespread apprehension, while inflation, nearing a staggering 10 per cent, was compounding the problems. Interest rates had risen to 1.75 per cent in August 2022, the sixth time that year, and were widely expected to rise again. This was a clear signal that the era of cheap money that had followed the 2008 global financial crisis was over.⁴

As she came closer to becoming Prime Minister, concerns mounted about her economic thesis, expressly what the promised fiscal event would entail. Among her top four economic ministers, Rees-Mogg and Clarke were telling her to stick to her guns, while Kwarteng had growing qualms, and Philp was the most agitated. The one person who could have stopped her in her tracks was Kwarteng. Unlike Truss, he has since publicly admitted that mistakes were made. He had put his reservations to her at the Team Truss strategy meetings at Chevening during the summer, and then later, in Downing Street, but he now recognizes that he should have been more forceful. His suggestions included delaying the Mini-Budget to either November or even the spring; clawing back some of the cost of the energy support package; and, critically, incorporating reductions in spending as part of the Mini-Budget package. Truss referred back to her experience as Chief Secretary to the Treasury and, thinking that discussing cuts would be politically painful, dismissed his suggestions. And, to his subsequent regret, he accepted it.⁵ Chancellors have formidable power to change policy, and he threw it to the wind.

In contrast, Philp was more forceful. He argued internally that to support the plan for tax cuts some accompanying spending restraint was needed, by comparison to the baseline assumptions. He wrote to her about this on 30 August. He submitted another document on 20 September arguing that, unless the Mini-Budget clearly stated that the government was trying to balance the books, the reaction could be very destabilizing. Her response? ‘Liz was manic and made it very clear this was not something she wanted to do,’ said one of her advisers.

Teaming up with Kwarteng, Philp inserted a page into the Chancellor's draft Mini-Budget speech on spending restraint, and switching resources from the public to the private sector. 'Rebalancing from the state sector towards the private sector will produce downward pressure on inflation by increasing supply of goods and services that people want to buy. We also need to maintain the confidence of the bond markets in our fiscal plans.' But to their disgust, as a witness recalled, the document came back from No. 10 with the passages about spending restraint and cuts chopped. 'What on earth has happened?' Philp demanded to know of Kwarteng. 'I called No. 10 and they told me in no uncertain terms to take it out,' the Chancellor replied. It's hard to think of any Chancellor in decades who would have meekly done as he was told by No. 10, reversing what he knew to be right.

Truss's own political team also expressed their concerns about her feverishly adding to the Mini-Budget. They were content with the three major items she had campaigned on – reversing the rise in National Insurance, cancelling the planned corporation tax increase and pausing green levies – but they were alarmed at raising the pension age to seventy, a change that she was particularly keen on. After a fight, they made her realize it was impossible politically. But they were unsuccessful in resisting her other additions. She was just about to unleash the mother of all add-ons. The change to the 45 per cent income tax rate had been discussed at Chevening, and then dropped, but she wanted it back in.

Truss's mind had been racing during the prolonged mourning period. On the evening of Thursday 15 September, she summoned Kwarteng up to the Downing Street flat: 'I've been thinking,' she told him. 'I've decided to abolish the highest rate [45 per cent] of income tax.' He was wary about such a bold tax cut so early, but he noticed that the PM was very determined. 'Let's just do it,' she said.

As soon as he left, Kwarteng dictated a note to his special advisers' WhatsApp group: 'Liz is happy with the budget, but she wants to do the 45p change now.' His special adviser team groaned. They saw the dangers. 'If you're going to do that, you'll have to do something for everyone to balance it or all hell will break loose,' said Cameron Brown. To

compensate, he suggested they bring forward the 1p cut in basic income tax for everyone from 2024. Not that this move did anything to reduce the subsequent fury of Tory MPs against a change that was widely seen as favouring the wealthy at a time of economic hardship. By the morning of Monday 19 September, the date of the Queen's funeral, it was already on the Treasury scorecard, but with an even more limited circulation list than usual.

Scrapping the bankers' bonus cap also caused concern among her team. "If you scrap it before you decide what to do with benefits, it will look very bad politically," we told her. But she was not listening.' They, like Kwarteng, queried why the Mini-Budget had to be so soon. 'She kept repeating again and again "I've only got two years. I've got to make my mark early on." We were getting absolutely nowhere.'

Some of her more independent-minded economists were warning her too, as we have seen, notably Gerard Lyons and Julian Jessop. The Sunday papers on 4 September, the eve of her victory, speculated about possible tax cuts in the Mini-Budget. Lyons was worried. Kwarteng received a message from him saying, 'The markets are unlikely to settle until interest rates have risen much further. It's important that they are convinced that your fiscal plans are necessary, noninflationary and affordable.' He received a perfunctory reply.

Treasury officials, still in shock at the dismissal of Tom Scholar, were reluctant to voice their concerns. 'Even after Chevening, there was much less pushback from the Treasury than expected,' said an aide. 'The sense was they were working for Kwarteng to produce the proposals for him that he wanted to articulate.' Suddenly shorn of their leader and without a permanent successor, officials were in no man's land at a critical moment. There *were* warnings: 'They had very clear warnings that were both written and spoken in advance about the measures coming at a time of very volatile and unstable markets, if they did indeed take large unfunded fiscal measures against this backdrop,' said one senior Treasury official. However, they added that 'the tone was very different. Of course we said what it would

cost and the pros and cons of different options, but following the departure of Tom, the advice was more cautious.’

The Office for Budget Responsibility felt under no such constraints. Set up as the financial watchdog by George Osborne in May 2010 to enhance fiscal stability, it was an official but also independent institution. After twelve years in operation, its twice-yearly reports had become regular parts of the fiscal establishment, assessing policy and producing forecasts for the economy and public finances free of party politics. Bring in the OBR? ‘You must be joking,’ said Truss. To her, it was full of ‘spineless’ people who consistently produced inaccurate and pessimistic forecasts that were damaging the economy. ‘She kept banging on about forecasting being anti-growth. It was a complete fixation for her,’ said one minister. Richard Hughes, OBR Chair since October 2020 and ex-Treasury, and not adverse to strong judgements, was viewed with particular suspicion. Hence her decision with Kwarteng very early on to dispense with the OBR’s forecasts – taken at the same time as the decision to sack Scholar – a decision they kept tightly to themselves.

The OBR was trying to imagine what the next PM and Chancellor might do. In the leadership campaign, it kept away from all potential candidates because legally it can only assess current government policy. It had published a forecast for the March 2022 Budget when Sunak was Chancellor, but became concerned by how rapidly the economic climate deteriorated, with inflation and interest rates rising. On that occasion, it was Sunak who thought the OBR had been too pessimistic. The March 2022 report had envisaged some £28 billion of financial ‘headroom’, i.e. money available to be spent, and Truss and Kwarteng had seized on this sum as providing the money to pay for their planned fiscal measure.⁶ But since March, rising interest rates added some £25 billion to government debt, and higher repayments and inflation added an extra £12 billion. Suddenly, the £28 billion of headroom had become an estimated £20 billion shortfall.⁷ The impact of these dramatic changes on their plans was not properly considered by Truss or Kwarteng.

Once the leadership campaign began in earnest in July, the OBR began preparing forecasts based on the policies of the two front runners, Truss and Sunak. When criticisms emerged from the former that they were too slow for the timetable in mind, the OBR redoubled its efforts. In a letter to Mel Stride, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, OBR Chair Richard Hughes wrote that ‘if asked by the new Chancellor to produce a forecast on 14 or 21 September, we would be able to do so to a standard which meets the legislative requirements of the Act and Charter’.⁸

The OBR was shocked when it learned that it wasn’t being asked to produce a forecast at all, and that no other forecast was being prepared. The argument came back that this was only a ‘mini-budget’ (a term Truss and Kwarteng used to try to play down its significance), and that some fiscal events, such as the emergency responses after Covid (notably furlough), did not come with a commentary from the OBR. The response within the head office was scornful: the reason why the markets responded as placidly as they did was because furlough was known to be a temporary measure (as was the Energy Price Guarantee), it was designed to protect the economy and the tax base, and every country was coming up with similar schemes. None of this applied to the Mini-Budget, which was unique to Britain, permanent not temporary, and the likelihood that it would strengthen the economy was far from assured. As a result of the exclusion of the OBR, a critical part of normal Budget preparations was removed, said one Treasury representative; ‘it was more difficult to evaluate without the OBR’ and the process was left ‘truncated’.

The Bank of England was the third part of the unholy ‘blob’ trinity, as malign as the Treasury and OBR in Truss’s eyes. She had rated Mervyn King (Governor 2003–13), but less so his successors Mark Carney (2013–20), who she thought should have raised interest rates earlier, and Andrew Bailey (2020–). To her, Bailey was the economic ‘blob’ personified, a past CEO of another part of the financial establishment she disliked, the Financial Conduct Authority, and before that working with the Financial Services Authority. In particular she thought he had reacted far too slowly in not raising interest rates. Reluctant to remove him in addition to Scholar,

in as far as she had that within her power, she did the next best thing in her eyes, by distancing the Bank from the Mini-Budget. ‘So many aspects about the Mini-Budget were odd,’ said a senior Bank official. ‘Treasury officials were unable to tell us about it, which was very unusual because the proposed changes were so large; no OBR forecast was unusual; and it was very unusual to have a big fiscal event the day after a Monetary Policy Committee [MPC].’ The Committee had been due to meet the week before, but that meeting had been postponed because of the official mourning.

The MPC’s brief is to set the Bank of England’s monetary policy to meet the government-set medium-term inflation target of 2 per cent in a way that helps sustain growth and employment. When it convened on 22 September, the day before the Mini-Budget, it voted to increase interest rates by 0.5 per cent to 2.25 per cent. The day before, the US Federal Reserve had tightened policy with an increase of 0.75 per cent, and there had been some expectation in the markets that the Bank of England would follow suit. So when it didn’t, the markets thought the Bank had been hopefully cautious. ‘The markets thought we had more to do, and they were anticipating the need to do more later,’ said one of the Bank’s leading figures. It created a difficult economic and financial background for the Mini-Budget, and made Kwarteng’s task even more difficult. Admittedly, the situation’s volatility ought not to be overstated; writing to the Treasury Select Committee on 5 October, Deputy Governor Jon Cunliffe noted that ‘Sterling was broadly stable and long-term gilt yields rose by around 20 basis points that day.’⁹

Timing had been fraught as well. Parliament was due to go into recess for two weeks from the end of Friday 23 September for the party conferences, and would not return until Monday 10 October. Until the Queen’s death, Truss and Kwarteng had toyed with going at the end of the second week (Friday 16 September), but that was immediately ruled out by official mourning. The question was then asked whether to hold the Mini-Budget after the annual party conference in mid-October or later. But Truss would hear nothing of it. Like a cracked record she repeated, ‘We’ve had ten years of stagnation, we can’t wait.’ Even the choice of Friday was

awkward: Budgets, traditionally, used to be on Tuesday, and then moved to Wednesday, which gave time before the end of the week for the response to work through the markets. Friday left only half a day and then the markets were in suspended animation until the response was seen the following Monday. This potentially left a vacuum that could be filled with a sense of uncertainty or pessimism, influencing the markets when they reopened. Of course, if the Budget had been considered sound, the timing would not necessarily have been a problem. Instead, it proved to be historic for all the wrong reasons.

The Mini-Budget and Immediate Reaction: 23–24 September 2022

Shortly after 9.30 a.m. on 23 September, with Truss to his right and Clarke to his left, Kwarteng rose to deliver a budget that he and Truss hoped would become as celebrated as Chancellor Geoffrey Howe's monetarist Budget of 1981 or Nigel Lawson's tax-cutting Budget of 1988. They certainly hoped that it would be seen as the dawn of a new era in economic policy. The mood from the Conservative benches during the speech was one of noisy affirmation and excitement. Apart from occasional shouts of disapproval from the opposition benches and gasps from the press gallery, there was little sense of how it would land in the wider world.

The speech closely followed the plan of action that Truss laid out for Kwarteng in his letter of appointment. The government's aim, he said, was for the economy to grow at 2.5 per cent in the medium term, enabled by cutting taxes to boost growth, reforming the supply side and maintaining a 'responsible approach' to public finance.¹⁰ 'For too long in this country, we have indulged in a fight over distribution,' he said. 'Now, we need to focus on growth, not just on how we tax and spend.' The two big fiscal measures – National Insurance and corporation tax – had been long promised. Truss had spoken out strongly against the former in Johnson's Cabinet, when Chancellor Sunak had insisted on increasing it, because she thought it

wrong to raise taxes on working people, though she didn't have the same deep feeling about the corporation tax increase.

Next were changes to stamp duty to help first-time buyers (an idea that had been met with broad support at Chevening), the VAT-free shopping scheme and the IR35 reforms to payroll working rules. Most eye-catching was Kwarteng's announcement of the abolition of the 45 per cent income tax rate on income over £150,000. This had been discussed at Chevening, where the consensus was to do it early when Truss had most political capital, but was only finalized at a private meeting between Truss and Kwarteng at the beginning of the week.

Particularly controversial was the fiscally neutral measure that even the Treasury didn't think made sense: the removal of the cap on bankers' bonuses, which Kwarteng argued only pushed up their basic salaries or drove financial activity elsewhere. Next came the idea that the Treasury strongly resisted: the establishment in England of 'investment zones' that would benefit from a range of tax incentives, liberal planning rules and no stamp duty. Kwarteng remained uneasy with the proposal, but Truss insisted on sticking with it. Buried in the Mini-Budget's documents was also the first estimate of the cost of the energy support package for 2022–23: a total spend of £60 billion for the domestic Energy Price Guarantee and the business Energy Bill Relief Scheme.¹¹

It was heady stuff, which the Tory MPs enjoyed, but how would it all be funded? Kwarteng did not explain. No one imagined the economy was going to improve and provide vastly increased tax revenues in the short term. However, instead of fiscal prudence or spending cuts, Kwarteng was proposing both tax *cuts* and increased *spending*. The Budget document had rhetorical commitments to 'fiscal discipline' and 'keeping spending under control', but no concrete proposals were forthcoming on how to do this.¹² What Kwarteng did promise was that 'a Medium-Term Fiscal Plan' would be outlined in due course, 'setting out our responsible fiscal approach more fully'.¹³

Afterwards, Kwarteng repaired with Matt Sinclair and other advisers to the Two Chairmen in nearby St James's for a pint. That afternoon, he and

Truss headed to Ebbsfleet in Kent for a visit to new housing developments. She later wrote in her memoir, ‘that afternoon was probably my happiest moment as Prime Minister. We had managed to deliver what we said we would.’¹⁴

Soon, the first non-partisan assessments on the Mini-Budget came in. Paul Johnson, the director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies, the leading economic think tank, commented, ‘Today, the Chancellor announced the biggest package of tax cuts in 50 years without even a semblance of an effort to make the public finances add up.’ He accused Kwarteng of borrowing large sums ‘at increasingly expensive rates’, putting government debt ‘on an unsustainable rising path’, and being ‘willing to gamble with fiscal sustainability’. He went on to say that Kwarteng was ‘willing to shrug off the risks of inflation’, and ‘pulling in the exact opposite direction to the Bank of England’. If that wasn’t bad enough, ‘we heard nothing on public spending... Mr Kwarteng is not just gambling on a new strategy, he is betting the house.’¹⁵

On the following morning, the papers delivered their verdict, with enthusiastic early responses from the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Telegraph*. This was the moment that many on the right had been longing for since Brexit; indeed, since Thatcher. ‘The boldness and courage of Kwasi Kwarteng’s debut budget is seismic,’ wrote Alex Brummer in the *Daily Mail*. ‘By taking a hatchet to taxes and placing growth front and centre of economic policy, the Chancellor has produced a genuine Tory package elbowing to one side the Treasury’s fiscal conservatism which restrained his predecessors. The scale of the package is mind-boggling. Liz Truss and her Chancellor have turned their backs on the doomsters in the think-tanks, in the civil service and on the political Left to launch a revolution.’¹⁶ ‘AT LAST! A TRUE TORY BUDGET’, screamed the headline. ‘With one move, Britain’s competitiveness, its investor friendliness and its attractiveness to top talent has been hugely amplified,’ wrote Allister Heath for the *Telegraph*.¹⁷

‘This is not a plan for growth, but a plan to reward the already wealthy. It is a return to the trickle down of the past. It is back to the future, not a

brave new era,’ said Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves in her reply to Kwarteng.¹⁸ ‘A budget for the rich,’ said the *Guardian* the following day.¹⁹ These comments were to be expected, but much more significant was the response from two less partisan sources; no amount of criticism from the Truss team could eradicate their sting.

The *Financial Times* accused Truss and Kwarteng of acting capriciously, changing the direction of economic policy on which the Conservatives had been elected in December 2019. The new plan ‘wasn’t just clear. It wasn’t just bold. It was kamikaze – or should we say, kami-Kwasi. Less Britannia Unchained, more Britannia Unhinged.’ Particular ire was directed at the removal of the bankers’ bonus cap (which they could spend on ‘cheaper champagne’ achieved by ‘shorting the pound’). The Mini-Budget was seen as the fourth major change in direction of economic policy since 2010, with this one appearing ‘the most reckless metamorphosis yet’.²⁰

Then, *The Economist* ripped into the economic illiteracy of the Mini-Budget, which, it argued, sought to introduce Reaganomics without comprehending the conditions that enabled the Reagan economic transformation in the 1980s. For example, a strengthening dollar was essential to its success, yet in Britain ‘the pound has slumped by 16% against the dollar in 2022’; to date, ‘The pound has fallen... because it is perceived as a riskier asset than [other] currencies and investors are worried about global growth.’ An expanding and relatively youthful workforce was equally important to the Reagan boom, but ‘Britain is ageing and its economy is still adjusting to Brexit.’²¹ Reagan, it might be added, also had the world’s largest economy, and the vast natural resources of the American continent, on his side. These were all points that Truss either didn’t know about, or chose to ignore.

Almost from the moment Kwarteng sat down in the Commons, the value of the pound began to fall. By the end of the day it stood at the lowest level against the dollar since the 1980s. The FTSE 100 had its worst daily fall since the height of Covid, as traders sold off UK assets, and borrowing costs on five-year bonds experienced the largest increase in a single day.

The markets hadn't expected, and had received no forewarning, of the 45 per cent income tax change, and they were surprised by the generosity of the energy support package.²² Indeed, even in the Treasury, there were raised eyebrows. 'It was a surprise to me. The sense in the Treasury was "that's quite punchy, not because of the money but because of the signal that it's sending, on top of everything else they're doing",' one senior official said.

Late that afternoon, a worried Simon Case, whose job as Cabinet secretary was to be the nation's chief worrier, sent a message to the Treasury to say the market reaction to the Chancellor's statement was already 'outside expectations', even taking into account that markets across the world were falling. By Friday evening, sterling was weakening and sinking further, and long-term gilt yields were rising quickly, causing the value of these government-issued bonds to drop.²³ Anxious calls were coming into the Bank of England, with particular concerns about pension funds, which were heavily invested in gilts. Bank officials became increasingly concerned: in response to the shock, selling was continuing, which led to prices falling. They stayed watching the markets in the USA, which were open till 10 p.m. UK time, and were in regular contact with their opposite numbers in the Treasury. Kwarteng was difficult to contact that evening but the Bank and Treasury representatives eventually agreed jointly that there was no need to react yet.

For its part, the Bank had been, according to one senior figure, 'completely blindsided' by the contents of the Mini-Budget. It had been briefed by the Treasury on the Wednesday before. But there had been no suggestion of the cuts in stamp duty and the abolition of the 45p rate, because the Treasury was apparently unaware that Truss and Kwarteng had taken those decisions.

Truss was phlegmatic, at least on the surface. But her team had already started to ask why the Bank and the Treasury had not indicated there might be serious market disruption. The best answer they could come up with was that it was as much a reaction to the personalities of Truss and Kwarteng,

and concerns about what the government might do next, as the substance of what had been announced.

On Saturday morning, a worried Case called Bank Governor Andrew Bailey. ‘What on earth is going on?’ he asked. A short while after, the No. 10 Private Office called a senior official at the Bank to ask the same question: ‘For God’s sake, explain what is happening. We don’t understand.’ Downing Street was now in regular touch with the Bank’s leadership. They sent the same message back: ‘The markets are losing confidence *quickly*.’ Case then messaged Catsaras to say ‘The reactions are worse than the Treasury was expecting. The Bank are watching very closely.’

To restore stability, the Bank advised that the government bring forward the timing of its plan in order to show it still believed in the fiscal framework and that it had a proper financial plan. Bailey advised Case to tell them to stop badmouthing the OBR too. There needed to be some indication of fiscal responsibility not least before the next MPC in November. It was clear that Kwarteng needed to go public the following day and say *something* to steady the markets.

On Sunday morning, it was agreed that Kwarteng would be a guest on Laura Kuenssberg’s BBC flagship politics show. An insider at the programme said, ‘We had asked for Kwarteng to represent the government because of the market meltdown during the week,’ not expecting him to accept so readily. During Kwarteng’s private briefing by his media team beforehand, ‘a carefully apologetic line, and talk about robust action to put us on a more secure footing’ was agreed, said one special adviser. The aim was that Kwarteng would ‘reduce the pulse rate, calm it down’. But then, fatally, Kwarteng spoke to Truss shortly before he went on the show. And she suggested that he double down on their agenda. She had spoken to her advisers, and decided, according to one of those advisers, that ‘we don’t think that he should be too apologetic’. She suggested he utter four words that have become among the most consequential in modern economic history: ‘there’s more to come’.

On air, Kwarteng did not say anything about the intention of producing a costed plan, or a long-term framework, later in the autumn. He defended the government's policy and direction. 'We are very focused on making sure that people keep more of their own money,' he told Kuenssberg. He defended the Mini-Budget and rejected her arguments that it was pushing in the opposite direction to the Bank of England's counter-inflationary policies. He told her that as a result of conversations, 'I've said that I will see the Governor twice a week and we share ideas... but... there was no way we were going to get more growth by simply increasing taxes and taking more of people's money.'

After a few minutes, Kuenssberg argued that the government was reducing taxes on the wealthy. Kwarteng responded with the rationale for his decision, and then uttered those famous words: 'There's more to come.' He continued, 'We've only been here nineteen days. I want to see over the next year people retain more of their income because I believe that it's the British people who are going to drive this economy.' When challenged on this, he reinforced what he had said: 'The only way we are going to pay for our public services in the future, the only way we are going to have the kind of economy and society we want is by growing this economy, and that is what I, the Prime Minister and the government are 100 per cent focused on.'²⁴

One of Truss's advisers, watching with surprise, shot off a text message to a fellow special adviser: 'Did we know he'd say this? It's a totally crazy thing to say!' The response came back quickly: 'It was almost off the cuff, bombastic. That is his style.'

Kwarteng had intended his remarks to convey Nelsonian sangfroid and reassurance. He hoped that sending out a message that the government was not about to change course would deliver all the confidence that the markets required. But that was not how the four words were received. Instead, the markets wondered how *much* more was to come – what, how and when? Did this government, which had removed Tom Scholar and sidelined the OBR, have any sense of fiscal responsibility? Where were the tax cuts going to come from? Where, exactly, was this going?

At least one economist believes that Kwarteng's television appearance that morning was the critical moment in the Truss premiership: 'The markets had stabilized by Friday evening, and the weekend should be the time when the Chancellor took stock and got on top of the messaging.' Had there been a more confident team at the top of the Treasury, or perhaps a long-standing permanent secretary who knew the terrain, things might have been different.

'The Chancellor says on Sunday that the government plans more tax cuts and the fiscal credibility of the government detonates,' one of the Bank of England's leadership recalled. He had been receiving worrying signals all weekend. That Sunday afternoon, one Bank economist spoke to a trader on one of the East Asian markets, to be told that 'everything British had to be sold and the markets would be testing the resolve of the British government'. Then, on Sunday evening, the directors of the Bank of England held a conference call. The mood was bleak. Sterling was already falling in East Asia and there were rumbles in the gilt markets. There was indeed 'more to come', just not as Kwarteng intended. Looking back, Kwarteng reflected, 'Yes, it was a foolish thing to say.'²⁵

Meltdown: 26–30 September 2022

Twenty minutes after the gilt and currency markets opened in London at 8 a.m. on Monday 26 September, a critical call took place between Bailey, the Deputy Governors and other key market figures at the Bank. There was a lot to discuss, and strong opinions were expressed. Did the Bank need to put out a statement that the monetary framework was secure? Did the Bank need to make clear to the markets that it would raise rates by as much as necessary to bring inflation back to target and offset the inflationary impact of the Mini-Budget? Would it do whatever was needed to stabilize prices through the use of interest rates? Had the time come to announce an extraordinary meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee? If so, it would be the first such since the emergency meeting during Covid, and there was a risk that if they did convene one, there'd be no alternative but to raise

interest rates. Some argued that an emergency meeting might have precisely the opposite effect of reassuring the markets. Moreover, several commentators had fuelled the speculation that there would be an MPC meeting, increasing the pressure. Despite this, there was little support for convening the MPC, and instead they agreed a reassuring statement should be put out at 10 a.m.

At this point, Treasury officials intervened to inform the Bank that the Chancellor wanted to put out his own statement at the same time, fearful that a unilateral statement by the Bank would expose him.

No. 10 had been in meltdown on Monday morning. The expectation in the Truss camp had been that the markets would play up, but fairly soon calm down. That transparently wasn't happening. Case walked into No. 10, grabbed a couple of Truss's staff and said, 'You two guys come with me to see the Prime Minister.' She was resolute: the message she wanted to give out was 'all is well'. Indeed, she didn't want Kwarteng to put out a statement at all: 'The markets will have to learn that this is the way that we're going to be doing policy from now on', was her adamant position.

Her apparent serenity – which struck some as completely detached from reality – surprised officials at the Treasury and the Bank. Fraught conversations ensued, concluding with Kwarteng saying he would agree to a *joint* announcement being issued. 'No way', was the swift response from the Bank. All the time, those involved in the discussion were nervously watching their television screens as sterling fell, reaching an all-time low against the dollar at \$1.03, its lowest level since decimalization in 1971. The nightmare scenario was it would sink below \$1 (though it recovered to \$1.10 by the end of the week).

Kwarteng fought Truss hard to let him make a statement, and while that struggle went back and forth, the Bank was told to hold fire on releasing its own 'because Kwarteng's office continued to argue that it would look very bad if it made an announcement before the Chancellor', said an official.

The air cleared after lunch, when Kwarteng's statement eventually went out, pledging what he had planned to say on television the day before: he would deliver a Medium-Term Fiscal Plan on 23 November and the OBR

would be asked to produce a forecast.²⁶ This proved a major concession as it involved having to balance the books five years out. ‘This was the moment when the process of realizing that there would have to be some very serious and project-changing cuts began,’ said an official. The Bank made its own statement at 3 p.m.: ‘The Bank is monitoring developments in financial markets very closely in light of the significant repricing of financial assets.’²⁷ For all the fraught back and forth about the statements, neither was to make much difference to the markets.

Truss spoke to Treasury officials at 8.30 p.m. and, one recalled, they ‘explained to her that the position we were in was much more serious and it needed to be stabilized’. Teams at No. 10, the Treasury and the Bank sat up late debating what further action might be required. That evening, concerns about Liability Driven Investments (LDIs) began to trouble the Treasury and Bank of England. ‘A message came through that they’d been hearing worrying news from LD investors,’ said one Treasury official. ‘The great worry was that LD firms would have to offload gilts rapidly in the morning and that would create a huge market reaction.’

The outlook on the morning of Tuesday 27 September seemed better; for a while it looked as if enough had been done to calm the markets. There was momentary relief in the Treasury. But then banks and building societies started to withdraw mortgage products as a result of concerns about a possible increase in the interest rate. Virgin Money and Skipton Building Society stopped mortgage offers altogether for new customers.²⁸ News then broke that, in a rare public attack on the government of a prominent country, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had launched a stinging criticism of Truss’s government. It called on No. 10 to reconsider tax cuts to prevent them stoking inequality, saying the measures risked undermining the Bank’s efforts to tackle inflation and that they would worsen the cost of living crisis.²⁹

By mid-afternoon, conditions were deteriorating badly. At this point a new term began to be heard in the corridors of Whitehall: ‘LDIs’. Staff in No. 10 turned to their computers to look it up. One witness said, ‘There was huge ignorance about them across the system really, absolutely no one

knew about them.’ It was like twenty-one years before when, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, flummoxed staff were sent from Downing Street to buy books about the Taliban and Al Qaeda.³⁰ The only person who seemed to understand them was the Treasury’s chief economic adviser, Clare Lombardelli, who had worked at the Bank earlier in her career and was the main conduit of conversations between both institutions during the crisis. ‘She started talking to us about them: we had never heard about them,’ said a Cabinet Office official. Liability Driven Investment is a long-term investment strategy used by pension funds. They are designed to ensure that the investor has income-generating assets to satisfy their financial obligations, which is vital for organizations that have to make regular payouts. Many UK pension funds had adopted a liability-driven investment strategy and had borrowed heavily to invest in UK gilts to meet future needs. These funds held capital cushions against risk, but as yields rose rapidly, and prices fell sharply, they needed to post more capital as collateral but many lacked the cash to do so and risked default.³¹

Fund managers started telling the Bank that if the trend continued, LDI funds were likely to fall into negative asset value and they would have to begin winding up on Wednesday morning. This meant that a large quantity of gilts, held as collateral by LDI funds, would likely be sold on the open market. The Bank’s executive convened a meeting to brief the Financial Policy Committee about the fear of a ‘self-reinforcing spiral... threatening severe disruption of core funding markets and consequent widespread financial instability’.³² Truss later admitted that she had never heard of LDIs. ‘The Treasury should certainly have warned us about them, as should the Bank,’ she said. She was also angry that the Bank announced the sale of £80 billion of gilts the day before the Mini-Budget.³³ ‘I could never introduce the measures I wanted against such institutional resistance.’³⁴

It became clear to the Bank that it would have to intervene. But how? The difficulty was that it needed to tighten monetary policy by interest rate rises and selling gilts, while at the same time buying gilts to enhance financial stability, a contradictory position the Bank had not found itself in before. All Tuesday evening and through the night Bank staff, in close

collaboration with Treasury officials, worked out the details of the plan, which was agreed by the Bank's Executive early the next day.

On Wednesday morning, Kwarteng was briefed on the details of the scheme by Lombardelli and the Treasury team. It would have to be indemnified by the Treasury, which he would have to approve. Truss was briefed on the plan by Case, and she too agreed with the Treasury support. Kwarteng then phoned Bailey and gave his approval; the Bank of England was cleared to act.

Hence its statement late morning on Wednesday 28 September that as the 'repricing' had become more intense on Tuesday, particularly affecting long-term government debt with its risk to UK financial stability, the Bank was acting to reduce risks from contagion to UK households and businesses. To achieve this, it would carry out temporary purchases of long-dated UK government bonds at whatever scale was necessary to achieve market stability. The operation would be fully indemnified by the Treasury and would be explicitly time-limited, ending on 14 October.³⁵ One Bank insider later said that 'the problem was essentially one of time; the gilt price moves after the Mini-Budget were so sharp and fast that the normal mechanisms for recapitalizing the asset management funds could not work.' Hence the Bank's intervention was designed to buy time. The message that the Bank was prepared to buy up to £65 billion of long-dated gilts to prevent the market rout was designed to overawe the markets with the Bank's 'fiscal firepower'.³⁶ It worked, and, ultimately, the Bank spent £19.3 billion in doing so (with all of the gilts sold back to the market between November 2022 and January 2023).³⁷ The immediate response was encouraging: there was a 100 basis point fall in thirty-year gilt yields (effectively, their prices were returning to normal).³⁸ Good for the Bank's credibility but not for the government's.

Thursday 29 September saw an irate Truss berate her team. 'You should've communicated the Mini-Budget better in the first place,' she thundered to a small group of advisers huddled in No. 10, as one recalled. 'The communications have been a total s**t-show.' A long pause ensued before Simon McGee, her director of communications, mustered his

courage to speak: 'Prime Minister, we hadn't heard about key elements of the Mini-Budget even twelve or fourteen hours before. You can hardly blame us.' A silence followed.

'You're right. It's my fault,' she said.

That morning, Truss broke her self-imposed public silence. 'From the moment she had stepped into No. 10 until this point, she had her blinkers on. She had no idea what the Conservative Party was thinking. No idea what the nation was thinking. She had refused to read the newspapers. Now she suddenly changed direction,' said one of her team. As if on an adrenaline rush, she gave no fewer than twenty-four live interviews from No. 10. These were with local radio and television stations, deemed to be a safer way of getting her message across than through the national BBC. It proved a humiliation; the local radio presenters were well informed and confronted the Prime Minister bluntly. Rima Ahmed from BBC Radio Leeds asked, 'Where have you been?', pointing out that nothing had been heard from Truss over the previous four days of chaos.

'Are you ashamed of what you've done?' posed Anna Cookson, presenter for BBC Radio Kent. 'I think we have to remember the situation this country was facing...' Truss ventured before Cookson said, 'And you've made it worse!' There was no let-up from other parts of Britain. 'Are you cleverer than the IMF, the economists and bishops who all slammed the Budget?' one asked, then, 'Have you taken the keys to the country and crashed the economy?'³⁹ Worse than any response that she offered was her tone – robotic, rote and lacking in empathy towards people suffering in the crisis. She didn't seem to know what she was doing.

The strain was beginning to show. Later that day, during a study session for her conference speech, she briefly lost her composure and wept, according to one who was there. 'The speech writing isn't that bad,' said one of her team, trying to cheer her up. 'Yeah, just feeling emotional,' she responded. 'Great speech. Twenty-five-year anniversary of your first conference – you were arguing then against the NICs [National Insurance contributions] rise,' they added. 'It's making me emotional, honestly,' she said. She recovered after a minute or so and the session continued.

At the heart of Truss's strategy was positioning herself to beat Labour in the general election. She wanted to win her own mandate and then have five years to cement her project properly. The strategy wasn't going to plan. That week, the contrast with Keir Starmer could not have been starker. His conference speech in Liverpool on Tuesday had been powerful, castigating 'the Tory trickle-down fantasy' and promising that 'Britain will get its future back'. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined being gifted a better launchpad for his keynote: 'The government has lost control of the British economy – and for what? They've crashed the pound – and for what? Higher interest rates. Higher inflation. Higher borrowing. And for what? Not for you. Not for working people. For tax cuts for the richest 1 per cent in our society. Don't forget. Don't forgive.'⁴⁰ A YouGov poll for *The Times* on Thursday reported Labour now had a 33-point lead, the biggest gap between Labour and the Conservatives since the 1990s. This was accompanied by reports of mounting pressure on Truss to rethink her entire policy.⁴¹

It was at this point, before Truss's own conference speech, that Conservative MPs gave up on her and started to openly discuss what could be done. 'It was also the time, three weeks in, when officials in No. 10 concluded that she was never going to make it,' said one insider. 'But to their credit, they never let up or let on. They continued to serve her till the end with a loyalty she didn't always deserve.'

Truss realized that she would have to go further still and parley with the enemy. On Friday 30 September an announcement was released that she would meet the OBR's Budget Responsibility Committee to discuss their forecast intended to accompany Kwarteng's Medium-Term Fiscal Plan scheduled for 23 November.⁴² She hated to do it but realized she would have to trim her sails if her project was to remain seaworthy. So, through gritted teeth, she asked her office to contact the OBR: 'The Prime Minister would like to meet you,' its very surprised chair Richard Hughes was told. He duly trooped into Downing Street with his senior colleagues, under no illusion that this was anything other than a PR exercise to show the world that 'the OBR was back in town'. True to their remit, the OBR team costed

the policies that had been announced, and put a revised forecast to Kwarteng privately, meshing in work that the Treasury had already done on costings for the Energy Price Guarantee. It was the only time Hughes met Truss.

She continued to hate the OBR and the ‘blob’ with a vengeance. The departed Tom Scholar remained a figure of dark suspicion, blamed for encouraging the IMF to utter its damning verdict midweek.⁴³ Such a claim is indicative of the state of her and her fellow travellers’ mindset at the time. It would also have been news to Scholar himself, who was walking the coast-to-coast Wainwright trail across Northern England and was not in contact with anyone in the financial community. Others close to Truss believed that ‘Conservative MPs allied to Sunak phoned their friends in the City to tell them to create havoc’.

‘Nonsense,’ says Charlie Bean, the Bank’s former Deputy Governor. ‘It was naïve if they did believe that because that’s not how the financial markets work. They are made up of thousands of individual actors and foreign banks. The idea that individuals could somehow collaborate together and conspire against the government is wrong-headed.’⁴⁴ A senior Treasury official said, ‘Liz Truss brought down Liz Truss. It was the speed in which she acted, the nature of her decisions, and her not using the institutional framework.’ They observed that had the Bank of England wished to bring down Truss, it might have done so simply by not buying up the gilts to stabilize the markets. This would have generated exactly the sort of crisis that would have caused Truss’s government to collapse.

The Verdict: Avoid Major Policy Failures?

The Mini-Budget most certainly qualifies as a major prime ministerial policy error; indeed, it is the greatest example of its kind in modern history. Despite that, it didn’t necessarily mean the end of the Truss premiership. Kwarteng’s admission to Laura Kuenssberg of ‘more to come’ was another axe blow to her premiership. But even that didn’t spell the end. Truss believed she had been unlucky – the economic climate and the death of the

monarch, compounded by institutional resistance – and, ever the optimist, she believed her luck would change. After the Mini-Budget, Kwarteng had said to Truss that ‘We will only have two months, unless you move more slowly.’ Even that was optimistic; in just twenty-two days’ time, she would throw in the towel.

The Mini-Budget might have worked earlier in the year, but not with inflation running at 9.9 per cent and the expectation of it rising to between 11 and 12 per cent. Economic growth was low, with many bodies including the independent National Institute of Economic and Social Research believing the UK had already entered recession.⁴⁵ Following the MPC’s rise in interest rates two days before to 2.25 per cent, the expectation was that they could rise as high as 5 per cent, and that was *after* twelve months of sharp increases.⁴⁶ The Energy Price Guarantee had been generous – too broad some thought, as it supported the affluent as much as the poor – and made a major hole in any headroom. Public sector net debt stood at 96.6 per cent of GDP in August, 1.1 per cent higher than the OBR had predicted in March.⁴⁷ Against this economic backdrop was much political uncertainty, with a new and volatile Prime Minister and Chancellor, the death of the Queen (and consequent growth-reducing bank holidays) and the sacking of Scholar. All of this, coupled with the dismissal of the OBR forecast, created huge anxiety in the market; the certainties that underlay the British economy and public finances no longer applied.

To make matters worse, interest rates were rising worldwide and the dollar was strong against most major currencies, which made sterling’s decline look bleaker than it was. The increased use of LDI strategies by some pension funds exacerbated the rise in UK government gilts, which triggered the vicious spiral of sales, driving up yields further and ultimately forcing the Bank to step in. Even that might have been manageable, but for the turmoil in the mortgage markets. This proved the final straw. ‘No one in No. 10 knew about the worries about gilts or LDIs,’ said one of Truss’s senior colleagues. ‘Either Treasury officials did, and deliberately decided not to tell her, or no one saw the gilt reaction and knew how to react.’ In fact, the Financial Policy Committee of the Bank had flagged up the LDI

vulnerability a year earlier to the Treasury. The one person who might have had the knowledge to warn about the impact and counsel how to deal with it was persona non grata.

For Truss to survive, she needed above all to restore the credibility of her growth plan. The Bank's intervention on Wednesday 28 September had brought stability. Would it be enough?



Rule Number Eight: Maintain a reputation for economic competence. Truss, her credibility in tatters, announces the departure of Kwarteng at an excoriating press conference on Friday 14 October

8

MAINTAIN A REPUTATION FOR ECONOMIC COMPETENCE

30 September–12 October 2022

Overseeing national finances was the Prime Minister's personal responsibility for the first 120 years of the office's existence. Indeed, until Robert Peel separated the Prime Minister's job from the Chancellor's in 1841, the Treasury at the end of Downing Street was the PM's own office. The importance of maintaining a reputation for financial competence has been etched into the cranium of every Prime Minister since the post's inception. That was, until a management accountant who had been Chief Secretary to the Treasury stepped across the threshold of No. 10: Liz Truss.

The Annual Party Conference: 30 September–5 October 2022

'It's Tom Scholar and his f**king mates at the IMF who are responsible for all the fuss,' she told aides on Friday 30 September. The Conservative Party's annual conference in Birmingham was due to begin the following day. 'The package is absolutely fine. It's just a communications problem: we simply haven't explained it clearly enough.' Truss was bouncing between two states of mind, from full-scale denial to believing all kinds of conspiracy theories. 'She was inhabiting a tiny bubble. She had cut herself off completely from what the media was saying and what her MPs were talking about,' lamented one of her senior advisers.

'We're not having newspapers in the office any more,' she had told officials at the start of her premiership. In a sense, they found this a welcome change from Johnson, who would fume over critical stories and

fire off angry messages. But Truss went disastrously far in the opposite direction: no Prime Minister since 1945 has shown such disregard for what the media, the PM's window on the world, was saying. Unlike most Prime Ministers, she never listened to Radio 4's *Today* programme: 'typical BBC', she would say. To compensate, her team prepared a daily digest for her of the key news stories including what was happening to the pound and on the markets. 'We put it into her box every day, but our suspicion was that she never worked her way down that far,' one recalled. So while her staff across Downing Street were glued to the television screens reporting the latest news on sterling and gilts, their boss was nursing pet theories out of touch with reality. 'Truss, Kwarteng and Sinclair, together with their friends, were not living in the real world but were just talking to each other in an echo chamber, constantly banging on about how right they were,' said an aide. 'It's just hedge fund managers buggering around', was Kwarteng's verdict at the end of the week.

Friday 30 September was a balmy day. Truss had wanted to convene a staff meeting in Downing Street before they packed up and left for the annual conference in Birmingham. Delays to an overseas phone call at No. 10 meant she shifted the meeting to her suite in Birmingham at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. When they gathered, they found her in a highly excitable state, her mind focused on her conference speech ('How's it reading? What do you think? Am I saying the right things?'). Nothing was going to spoil the conference's focus on growth and the economy. Word had gone out to the private offices of Secretaries of State across Whitehall with the emphatic message: 'The Prime Minister doesn't want there to be any policy announcements at conference.' The majority of her ministers were still working their way through their letters of appointment, and were content to do as asked. But not all. Some were thinking of their own futures.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman and Work and Pensions Secretary Chloe Smith had either not read the directive or chose to ignore it. Truss was exasperated when she found out: 'What don't they understand? Ministerial policy announcements never work at party conference: nothing must take away from our focus on growth!' she shouted. Then when

Braverman submitted her speech talking about further legislation to reduce migration, Truss exploded. The Home Secretary was summoned to explain herself. But reluctant to haul her over the coals, Truss was all sweetness and light, leaving Braverman with the impression that she had got what she wanted. ‘It was typical Liz. She never wants to be the bad guy, ever – she always wants other people to break the bad news,’ said one of her advisers. So it was left to her staff to explain that the Home Secretary was to edit out anything that could be construed as new policy. Braverman did not forget that the Prime Minister was not strong willed enough to deliver this reprimand herself.

Truss spent some of Saturday out and about greeting MPs and having conversations, as she loved to do, with journalists. The more she listened, the more it dawned on her that holding to Kwarteng’s pledge to remove the 45p rate of income tax on those earning over £150,000 would be unsustainable. ‘She was learning as if for the first time that MPs were unhappy with the economics of the Mini-Budget – she thought that they would be delighted and she was shocked. So by early evening she was beginning to rethink things,’ said an aide. Reports began to filter into her that former ministers she had excluded from government, especially Michael Gove and Grant Shapps, were on manoeuvres. The first to launch an attack had been former Chief Whip Julian Smith, who had been furious and attacked the Mini-Budget publicly as ‘wrong’ on the day it was given.¹ ‘It’s a completely barking policy,’ he angrily WhatsApped a government minister. The intelligence seeping up to her suite through the day incensed and stunned her. It was not a bit as she had imagined. For too long she had listened to those who had said MPs would love it when a Prime Minister finally enacted tax-cutting measures. Somehow she had managed to unite a broad coalition of MPs, disunited over many things but all believing she was getting it badly wrong. It was becoming clear that a rebellion of Tory MPs over the cut to the 45p rate would threaten the passage of the Mini-Budget legislation through Parliament.

Sunday 2 October was to prove one of the pivotal days of her short premiership. Early that morning, her senior team had met and concluded

that Truss wouldn't budge: Adam Jones briefed the media accordingly that 'the Lady is not for turning'. In her morning briefing before she went on BBC1's *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* she was palpably unsettled and edgy; she seemed to be in a strange mood, according to one adviser. Her 'we're sticking with the policy' appearance was followed, within moments, by Gove launching a sustained broadside on the Mini-Budget. He alleged that it was 'not Conservative' to fund tax cuts from borrowing, and said that the financial plans marked a betrayal of the party's 'One Nation' 2019 election manifesto.² Shapps came out with his own extraordinary attack later in the day, bluntly telling the BBC that the legislation would not pass the Commons: 'I don't think the House is in a place where it's likely to support that.' Disgruntled MPs, growing in number by the hour, said they would vote against the legislation, despite Party Chair Jake Berry saying they would lose the whip.³

'That snake' (Truss's standard moniker for Gove), she hissed when out of earshot of the television crew. 'She knew what Michael was like. But she was surprised because she never thought he would knife her so brazenly: she imagined her first party conference would be one big happy Conservative gathering with everyone supporting each other,' said an aide.

She was particularly perplexed because she had held a confidential conversation with Gove late morning on Tuesday 27 September. Acting on advice that he was biddable and that she should bury the hatchet, especially before the conference, he was called in. 'I'm not quite certain why I got the summons. It was very nice of her, but I was rather perplexed by what she was trying to say,' recalled Gove.

No meeting in the forty-nine days was odder; polar opposites, Truss now sat before the man she felt had patronized her when she was his junior minister at Education. They spent three quarters of an hour in a state of confusion, opposite each other in No. 10's Terracotta Room, no one taking notes. Fullbrook sat outside on a chair, keeping guard. According to Gove, he told Truss why he disagreed strongly with the 45p tax change. 'But there are some matters on which we agree, for example Israel,' she interjected. They shared similar views on Benjamin Netanyahu, and both supported

moving the British Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, recognizing the city as Israel's capital, as the United States had done in 2017. Gove began to feel that she was sizing him up to become British ambassador to Israel, which rankled him because he didn't like to think he was being bought off. Not wanting to rebuff her altogether, he said, 'You never know, Liz, after the general election, things might be different.'⁴

After Gove left, she had bounced up to her two top aides, saying, 'He's fully on board! His one condition is that we find room for "his boys".' This was her term for his tight-knit group of special advisers with whom he had worked for several years. Fullbrook and Porter exchanged knowing glances. 'To them, it looked like a suicide pact,' said a third party. 'A lifeline for Liz, maybe, but at the expense of embedding Gove and his lieutenants deep into her government.' 'She never imagined he would betray her, especially not with his nuclear bomb less than a week later,' said an aide. 'I didn't see how she possibly could have concluded that she had won me round,' Gove himself said of their meeting.

All Sunday she brooded. Perhaps she would have to bow to the inevitable. 'Nick, I'm thinking of dropping the 45p rate change. What do you think?'

In moments of high tension, Truss always turned to Catsaras. Now he was about to demonstrate just how dependable he could be.

'Yes, of course I think you should do it, Prime Minister.' 'Are you sure?'

'I think you should ditch the bankers' bonus too.'

'No, no. That's an EU thing. I won't do it.'

'So you are just going to ditch the 45p rate?'

'Yes, I think so.'

All day, she had been messaging different members of her team saying, 'Come up for a glass of wine.' It was clear that she was on a journey, realizing she had a full-scale rebellion brewing, and a limited concession would be sensible if she was not going to lose control of her agenda. So at 7 p.m., when her team had dispersed to attend various dinners and events, they each received a WhatsApp message from Sophie Jarvis to say 'Liz

might want us all to meet up', followed rapidly by a text from Truss herself demanding, 'Where are you? Come to my room now.' When the team had gathered – Porter, Sinclair, Stein, Jones, Hope and Jarvis – she went around each one and asked what they thought about abandoning the plans. 'Stick to your guns,' Porter said. Sinclair was even stronger: 'Hold your nerve.' Not all agreed. 'If you're going to make the change, do it early and don't hang around,' said Stein. The others were more nuanced but thought that if the economics and the politics were not stacking up, a change of course was right. Truss listened carefully and dispatched everyone back to their engagements, only for another summons thirty or so minutes later. This time they found she was joined by Chief of Staff Mark Fullbrook, Director of Strategy Iain Carter and the Chancellor.

Kwarteng was having dinner at the Malmaison Hotel with the cream of the country's bestselling paper, the *Sun*. Victoria Newton, the editor, was holding court with past and present political editors Trevor Kavanagh and Harry Cole. They were awaiting their main course when Cameron Brown, Kwarteng's media adviser, saw that Porter was calling him on his mobile so he stepped away from the table to pick up. 'The Prime Minister wants to see Kwasi at once to discuss dropping the 45p rate,' she told him. 'He's having dinner with the editor of the *Sun*. It will be very awkward if he slips away. Can't it wait?' he whispered. 'No, the Prime Minister wants to see him now.' Further protestations about how damaging it would look proved unsuccessful. But how could the young special adviser prise Kwarteng, in full flow, away from three of the most powerful forces in the British press? Out of the line of sight of the others, so he thought, he raised four fingers, then five to Kwarteng to indicate the topic. But Cole spotted it and quickly surmised what might be happening.⁵

Kwarteng was visibly unhappy at being dragged away from the dinner, and when they arrived at Truss's suite, they found Fullbrook holding the floor. 'The Prime Minister and I have been discussing the matter of the 45p tax rate,' he told them.

'I think we have to do something about it,' Truss said, giving the clear impression that she had made up her mind on one of the Chancellor's

flagship policies and that her team fully agreed.

‘I am not sure about it. I think we should tough it out,’ Kwarteng replied.

‘I’m sorry, Kwasi, but I’ve come to the conclusion we have to go for it.’

‘But why the change now? If we do, it’ll overshadow the entire conference.’

‘It’s already overshadowing the conference,’ she shot back at him.

‘I think we are exaggerating the problems. We can sort out the mathematics, we can’t let ourselves be dictated to.’

‘I’m sorry, but we have to do it. It’s our best way of keeping the initiative.’

Those present noted how their conversation fell into the usual pattern, with Kwarteng putting up a fight and making his case strongly, then backtracking and conceding to her. After ten minutes, they had agreed that the U-turn would have to be made, that he would announce it in his speech and that the press lobby would be briefed in the morning. He left the room apparently happy enough and even smiling, and she gave him an affectionate touch on the arm.

Truss then rushed down to attend a drinks party hosted by Graham Brady for the 1922 Committee, and another given by the ConservativeHome website at a nearby bar. But it became clear that speculation was already spreading fast, and a story was inevitably going to appear on the *Sun*’s website saying that the 45p tax rate abolition was being reversed.⁶ Truss was told the news had leaked out and she would lose the initiative. If she didn’t act, Tory MPs who had spent a week defending the policy in public would learn about the change from the *Sun*. So thirty minutes later, she spoke to Kwarteng on the phone. This time, his frustration and anger were evident to all on the conference call.

‘Kwasi, we’re going to have to announce it tonight.’

‘Why?’

‘It’s about keeping control.’

‘This doesn’t make any sense to me at all. First we agreed that we were going to do nothing but stick it out. Then we agreed we were going to make

the announcement tomorrow. Now you tell me you want to make it tonight.'

'I'm sorry, Kwasi.'

'This is totally shambolic and chaotic and we should not be doing this.'

He left the call far from happy.

At this point, tensions that had long been bubbling under the surface exploded into the open. 'What the f**k is this all about? We can't carry on with this frenetic policy-making,' one of his team said after the Chancellor had hung up.

'We're being forced into it,' one of Truss's team responded.

'No we're not. We're letting ourselves be bounced around from one opinion poll to another,' they responded.

The atmosphere was awkward. No one knew what to say. Truss's team was already divided, and now they were falling out with Kwarteng's team.

'I've had enough. I'm heading off to bed,' said the Prime Minister.

Rumours then reached the team that the *Daily Mail*, which had been markedly supportive of Truss, was going to run a front-page defence of the 45p tax rate decision. 'We can't let them do that,' one of her team said. So they instructed Kwarteng to speak to the editor, Ted Verity, to say 'you must do as you think fit, but if you run with that story, you're going to look rather silly because the policy is going to change'. The deed done, McGee, Stein and Jones debated how to tell the lobby at large. 'Going from full-on endorsing the 45p policy to abandoning it twelve hours later shows how impossible doing communications is for Liz,' they concluded. When they reached the ground floor, the doors opened onto three journalists who were following the emerging story with intense interest. All of them – Harry Cole, Ben Riley-Smith and Tim Shipman – would go on to write books about the events. 'You couldn't have made it up,' said one of Truss's team later.

'We get it, and we have listened,' Kwarteng tweeted at 7.30 a.m. on Monday 3 October.⁷ Hopes the announcement would regain the initiative took a bashing when Gove let it be known he'd still vote against any plan involving a real-term cut in benefits.⁸ Worse, former Cabinet ministers Damian Green and Esther McVey joined him in the criticism.⁹ Truss now

found herself under attack from supporters of Johnson (troubling given that his support had propelled her into Downing Street) as well as Sunak supporters.

In Kwarteng's conference speech, described as 'brief and abashed' by the *Guardian*, he admitted it had been 'a tough day'.¹⁰ Abolishing the 45p rate of income tax, he said, had become 'a distraction' from the other policies in the growth plan. He also took a swipe at Sunak for presiding over 'slow, managed decline'.¹¹ After Kwarteng's speech, Truss escaped back to her room to concentrate on her own speech, ignoring what was happening nearby on the conference floor.

It wasn't just politicians who were worried: back in the Cabinet Office, Simon Case had been holding conversations with the Treasury and the Bank of England. 'The 45p tax rate reversal made little difference as the markets are effectively priced in already,' said a Treasury official. Case was being told that 'more needed to be done to calm the markets'. A second U-turn thus followed in the form of advancing the date for the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan (to include cuts in spending) from 23 November to late October, and announcing it would be accompanied by a new forecast from the OBR. This was all designed to help restore market stability.¹² But even this didn't do enough to quell rebellion. 'The market still didn't have confidence in the government,' said an official. Additional political concerns were coming to the fore over how cuts in spending would hit benefits, which Kwarteng refused to rule out. Mel Stride, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee, then weighed in saying that further measures still might be needed 'to unwind' aspects of the Mini-Budget.¹³

The conference was falling apart in front of the whole country. Truss's supporters were livid. According to Jake Berry, 'It was appalling the way that Gove went around whipping up people against her. Together with Grant Shapps, they machine-gunned Liz. They would never accept that Liz had won. Then, it was utterly incredible that Mel Stride came out slamming the Mini-Budget. You can't overstate how ruthless these people were and how well tuned into the media.'¹⁴ Stride was regarded with deep suspicion in the

Truss camp as he was a well-known Sunak supporter – they wouldn't accept that he might be acting with anything other than a fratricidal motive.

Tuesday 4 October brought little relief. The sense grew that Truss had lost control, with Cabinet ministers, including Braverman, openly speaking off message. 'Here in Birmingham, there is a pervading sense that the damage has already been done,' wrote Charlotte Ivers for the *New Statesman*.¹⁵ 'Four weeks into her reign it feels as though the party is already over', was the verdict of Camilla Cavendish in the *Financial Times*.¹⁶ 'The conference was awful... the worst start to any premiership, I think, in recent history – perhaps even in all British history,' wrote historian Dominic Sandbrook.¹⁷

What was missing, oddly but devastatingly, were the voices of Conservative parliamentarians of authority. Where was her Foreign Secretary, her Home Secretary, her Defence Secretary? Where were the former Prime Ministers like Johnson or Cameron? Where were the former party leaders who still carried weight like Duncan Smith, Howard or Hague? Where were her rivals in the leadership contest, Sunak, Mordaunt and Badenoch?

When Major was under pressure in the build-up to his leadership re-election in the summer of 1995, the party grandees Michael Heseltine (DPM), Douglas Hurd (Foreign Secretary) and Ken Clarke (Chancellor) closed ranks around him. Chief Whip Alastair Goodlad and the Leaders of the Commons and Lords respectively, Tony Newton and Lord Cranborne, deployed their considerable influence bringing people into line.¹⁸ This time? Total silence.

Truss's DPM, Party Chair and Chief Whip let it be known they were angry with the critics, but it was 'sound and fury, signifying nothing' because none were weighty figures in the party. 'The vacuum showed just how paper-thin her support in Cabinet and party was: it was transactional only. They had backed her for personal gain. They were now re-evaluating their investment,' said former Chief Whip Gavin Williamson. 'You can't expect mercenaries to throw away their lives in battle.'¹⁹

Truss channelled all her anger into her speech. In one of the practice sessions her mind went back to how she had been defeated in the West Yorkshire constituency of Hemsworth in 2001. But she also remembered how, despite the former mining constituency's strong anti-Tory tendencies, the local people had liked her 'Save the Pound' stance: 'Those patriotic people were moving our way. And we won some of those seats in 2017, even under Theresa May. No offence to our great former leader.' Her team laughed. Pumping herself up, her mind went back even further, to the 1980s. 'We are in a similar position to then where we're making tough decisions that aren't necessarily popular that will deliver for the long term. I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing to hark back to that. If you want the best example of the policy prescription, it's Thatcher and Reagan between them. I wonder if we mention Reagan?'

'I wouldn't. It's a bit tired,' Stein volunteered.

'It's basically the same thing. The policies were said to be mad then too.'

'Everyone always calls Prime Ministers, Cabinets, policies – everything – mad,' Stein said, encouraging her.

Her state of mind was evident when she railed against pampered elites and the 'blob': 'They don't understand aspiration... They don't want to set up a business... They don't understand what's paying their f**king left-wing journalist wages... Have they ever been outside North London? And now, thanks to Zoom, they never need to leave!'²⁰

The actual speech was just as forthright, if less profane. It contained a passionate attack on the 'anti-growth coalition' holding back the country: 'I will not allow [them] to hold us back. Labour, the Lib Dems and the SNP, the militant unions, the vested interests dressed up as think tanks. The talking heads, the Brexit deniers and Extinction Rebellion... The fact is they prefer protesting to doing. They prefer talking on Twitter to taking tough decisions... From broadcast to podcast, they peddle the same old answers. It's always more taxes, more regulation and more meddling. Wrong, wrong, wrong.' The party membership loved it and sat ever further forward on their seats as she spoke. 'My friends, does this anti-growth

coalition have any idea who pays their wages? It's the people who make things in factories across our country. It's the people who get up at the crack of dawn to go to work. It's the commuters who get trains into towns and cities across our country.' The response was euphoric, the clapping going on and on.²¹

'We didn't expect it. She didn't expect it. You can see that in her face,' said an aide. 'This was the members delivering a very clear message to the MPs. This is the leader we want,' said another. It was, in that sense, a repeat-run of the leadership contest: the MPs didn't want her, the party in the country did. Something would have to give. But when?

Full Speed Ahead on Truss's Growth Agenda: 5–7 October 2022

'Press ahead. I don't want to hear any f**king objections,' a post-speech Truss told a meeting of her staff on Wednesday 5 October. She was acting as if the party conference had been a triumph. She had almost found herself talking to an empty room. 'I want us to meet up immediately when I'm back. I've got much to say,' she had told her team as she left the conference at midday on Wednesday, not appreciating they'd struggle to get back from Birmingham as quickly as she did in her traffic-clearing police convoy.

The 'hopper' (her 'super secret' announcement list) was the focus as they gathered around Truss at the Cabinet table. Truss had coined the name herself, inspired by the way in which her team fed material into a master document, and how it came out the other side in polished form, just like an industrial hopper. This was the growth agenda and supply-side revolution that she intended would dominate the autumn and beyond, and which she hadn't wanted her Cabinet ministers to foreshadow or upstage at conference. The hopper was going to be her secret weapon for regaining the initiative, wresting back the attention of the fickle media from their obsession with sterling and financial markets. Her three priorities – investment zones, changes to planning and regulation, and broadband – she fondly imagined would amount to a revolution akin to Thatcher's.

Urgency was dictated in part by her needing to be in Prague the following day for the first meeting of Macron's European Political Community. She could have done without it, especially as the very idea of it sounded fishy to the ERG. 'This is not about moving closer to Europe,' she had been at pains to stress in public, but rather about working with Europe 'on issues that we all face'.²² Urgency was also dictated by her knowing that in forty-eight hours there might be bad news from the OBR. 'We all knew it was coming, but she didn't want to talk about it,' said an aide.

For the remaining two weeks of her premiership, she exhibited manic and, some felt, unhinged energy pushing forward her growth agenda. A stream of announcements came from No. 10 focused on three priorities. 'She was infuriated by "nimbyism" and believed passionately that you have to allow construction if growth was to be stimulated,' said an aide. 'She didn't want to accept any limitations or problems.' The height of phone masts on public buildings created a particular furore when Coffey told her that MPs were objecting. 'I don't care how high the masts are – push ahead. Stop worrying about these things, Thérèse,' she said, according to an aide. One broadband initiative she was shown would cost £150 million, another £20 million, while another was cost-free but would require primary legislation to pave the way. 'We don't have time: we must pay for it.' 'But Prime Minister, this will need money, and I just don't think we're in a position to spend it,' said economic adviser Shabbir Merali. 'I don't f**king care. Press on,' she replied. 'It was all totally shambolic. The official machine was trying to help her, but it couldn't work at the speed and in the way she wanted,' said a senior adviser.

A Very Big, Very Black Hole: 7–9 October 2022

'Knock before entering', was the uncharacteristic message that the economics team pinned on the door of their office in No. 10 on Friday morning, 7 October. A short while before, they had gone over to No. 11 to receive a briefing about the OBR's forecast. They were told not to share what they had heard with anyone at No. 10 apart from Porter and Sinclair.

They knew it would be a problem. There would be a big gap between spending and revenue: the only question was how big.

The Treasury and the Bank of England had been in close conversation all week, very worried by the interest rate markets and the foreign exchange markets. They had been debating what interventions the Bank could make, and whether it could move beyond buying the conventional gilts it normally traded in to buying index-linked gilts.

No. 10 was focused on the more immediate issue of the size of the budgetary black hole. The expectation among the staff was that it would be large but manageable: the Resolution Foundation think tank had estimated it might be £36 billion.²³ But when Kwarteng was told the figure on Friday of £72 billion, caused by the largesse of the Energy Price Guarantee, the tax cuts and the slowing growth outlook, it was beyond worst expectations.

A top secret meeting was convened in the Cabinet Room. Truss and Kwarteng were fuming. ‘We must send out people to attack the f**king OBR and the IMF at once,’ they said. ‘Who at No. 10 have the Treasury and the OBR been speaking to?’ ‘Why didn’t they speak to us?’ ‘The OBR is just another example of a failed institution – they are in danger of losing the plot.’ The atmosphere was described by an adviser as ‘ugly, menacing even’. ‘The comments were very nasty in private, and for a time there was a real risk that the bile would seep out in public,’ said one who had been in the room. The rage was not without reason because the OBR projections of the future were unnecessarily pessimistic. As an aide said, ‘The precise moment the dream went wrong was after the OBR demanded eye-watering cuts. That was when the project ended, when it was game over.’

The financially literate knew what the politicians didn’t: this was one of the most serious fiscal predicaments in Britain’s recent financial history and the scale of spending cuts needed if the interest on debt incurred was not to damage the country would be extremely difficult to find, and all but impossible to achieve in one fiscal event. ‘I’m not so worried. We can achieve it through spending cuts,’ Kwarteng said. ‘But £72 billion is just an estimate: what happens if the hole increases to £80 billion?’ interjected one of the team. ‘The OBR forecast doesn’t take full account of growth. If we

make the supply-side reforms, the black hole will shrink. We must forge ahead with our supply-side reforms,’ responded Truss.

It was a dialogue of the deaf. ‘Listening to Kwarteng and Truss talk, the officials and economic advisers concluded that they had neither insight nor understanding about how economic growth occurs; no understanding about economics, nor financial markets, nor that you can’t cut £72 billion in one sweep,’ said an aide.

Saturday 8 October was spent examining options for cuts. Any hopes of a day off on Sunday after the frenetic conference week were rudely interrupted by a message that the Prime Minister wanted to see her team at Chequers on Sunday morning. A small political meeting preceded the main event, consisting of the PM, the Chancellor and special advisers. The atmosphere was a million miles from the optimism and exuberance of Chevening just six weeks before.

Rather than a conversation focused on the £72 billion and how to address it, much of the time was spent talking about parliamentary business for the week ahead, and, even more puzzlingly to some present, whether the PM should host a reception at No. 10 for the England women’s football team who had won the Euros during the summer (the decision was to meet them on Tuesday at their training ground).²⁴

For the main meeting, they were joined by senior Treasury officials. ‘The markets frankly were looking pretty grim – both exchange rates and interest rates,’ recalled an official. One described it as the most anxious moment of the whole Mini-Budget crisis aside from the hours leading up to the Bank’s announcement on 28 September to make its time-limited intervention.

As they all sat around the table at Chequers, their focus was the ‘Treasury spreadsheet’, which listed a range of remedial measures including windfall taxes and reversal of the Mini-Budget initiatives. Truss seemed to favour savings in departmental spending and cuts to capital projects, but the conversation ended inconclusively, with participants wondering what the plan was. The officials left for London without answers.

Truss asked her political team to stay back for a side meeting to debate whether Kwarteng should go to the IMF for its autumn meeting in Washington DC. Given the delicacy of the current financial climate, Truss thought he should stay in the UK, but he argued that this was the key annual meeting for finance ministers, and it would create more uncertainty if he did not go, that it should be business as usual. Reluctantly she agreed. The timing of the forthcoming fiscal event was then discussed. Monday 31 October had been the date agreed earlier in the week. Should it be moved even earlier? There were concerns of it being linked to Halloween with the prospect of endless lurid headlines, but more significantly, it was argued there was no time to lose for reassuring the markets that the government had a plan. A lack of urgency continued to worry some present, not helped by an unwillingness to pin down precise dates and figures.

Part of the problem was that the Treasury still did not have a permanent secretary to provide robust leadership and demand answers from Truss and Kwarteng. Cat Little and Beth Russell were providing gallant leadership, but they lacked the authority of established leaders, especially after it had been made clear that the full-time appointment would go to an ‘existing permanent secretary’, thereby knocking both of them out of the running. In the absence of a leader, Treasury officials were apprehensive about challenging Kwarteng and Truss head on. They were working on a strategy of incremental persuasion to bring them round to the realization that more urgent and drastic action was needed. But special advisers in both the Prime Minister’s and the Chancellor’s camps were beginning to realize that they might have to take action into their own hands.

The Abandonment of Truss’s Daring Treasury Plan: 5 September–10 October 2022

Of all the institutions that Truss and Kwarteng disliked, the Treasury came top of the list. ‘I had no problems with Treasury officials per se: I’d worked with them before. It was Treasury orthodoxy I couldn’t stand,’ said Truss.²⁵ They contemplated, if not seriously, dismantling it altogether. But history

was not encouraging: the last Prime Minister to dismember it was Harold Wilson, who created the Department of Economic Affairs in 1964. Five years later, it was reabsorbed back into the all-powerful Treasury. This was not a fight that Truss and Kwarteng wanted to have with the crazy timetable they had given themselves. Instead, they envisaged a remodelled Treasury operating under a permanent secretary who would approve of their commitment to radical thinking, organizational innovation and growth.

The person they both wanted was Antonia Romeo, an official with whom Truss had worked at the Department for International Trade between 2019 and 2021. There they had struck up a fruitful professional relationship. Romeo was exactly the kind of ‘can-do’ permanent secretary that Truss liked. Kwarteng held a similarly positive view of her and was equally irritated as Truss by the Treasury. When he had been Business Secretary under Johnson, he had repeatedly clashed with the Treasury over what he saw as its overly cautious attitude to growth.

Axing Scholar and putting in Romeo was all part of the same plan. To their irritation, however, they were told by Case they had to go through a formal application process. ‘Liz and I just had a general understanding we were going to go for Antonia,’ said Kwarteng. ‘We felt the Treasury was simply too controlling and we needed a different operation. We both liked her and thought she was the person to sort out the Treasury and make it a growth department.’²⁶ Romeo duly came out the winner of an official appointment process, and it was briefed that she was to start work shortly. But the meltdown on the markets changed everything.

Case spoke privately to Truss and told her there may be unrest in the department if Romeo, who had not worked in the Treasury, was brought in, and that the markets would also not be reassured to see a Treasury outsider appointed. So on Sunday 9 October when they were at Chequers, Truss told Kwarteng she was sorry, but she thought it too risky, she would play safe, and appoint someone they had initially discounted as being ‘continuity Scholar’. This was James Bowler, whom she had liked when he had succeeded Romeo as International Trade permanent secretary, and who had held a series of senior positions at the Treasury, as well as the crucial job of

principal private secretary to the Prime Minister (to Cameron in the Coalition government). Kwarteng was far from happy and thought him too 'Brownite', arguing strongly to keep with the Romeo appointment. It took her two attempts to persuade him the switch had to be made. Bowler's appointment was announced on Monday 10 October.

The collapse of the plan to make the Treasury the new UK growth department with Romeo at the head was a huge blow. It made a mockery of all the stick Truss had taken over the sacking of Scholar. The Treasury growth plan was effectively now dead.

So too was her plan to buy long-term gas supplies from Norway, having gained a fixed price from Equinor, the Norwegian state-owned energy company, at a cost of £130 billion. Kwarteng had the temerity to stand up to her on this, backed by some strong official advice. 'I am going to sign up for it regardless,' she said. But he steadfastly refused to let it go ahead. His advice indicated that the price was too high and it would almost certainly fall. Locking Britain into a gas deal at inflated prices would not help anybody. Sure enough, it was one of Kwarteng's few decisions to be fully vindicated and the price fell dramatically over subsequent months. The previous two weeks had toughened him. He would not let himself be pushed around again, he told himself. That wasn't the kind of Chancellor Truss had wanted.

A Revolt from Below: 10–12 October 2022

When the markets opened for trading on the morning of Monday 10 October, predictions of a collapse of confidence were widespread. Kwarteng spoke to the Bank early that morning to ask it to do more to provide cover by extending support for UK gilts beyond the declared date of Friday 14 October, just four days away, but to no avail. He was livid, as he later recalled: 'Why did our growth project fail? Because the Bank of England refused to extend the support beyond 14 October. It's no surprise the markets went into meltdown on 17 October.' Andrew Griffith, then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, recalled, 'My own experience of

markets taught me you just don't reveal your hand publicly like that. Tapering it off gradually would have been a better way to do it.'²⁷ The Bank was taking further action, which was helping to bring stability at the start of the week, including buying index-linked gilts. Bank officials were told by pension fund managers that this had significantly helped solve their LDI problem.

On Tuesday 11 October, to Kwarteng's fury, Governor Bailey repeated on stage at the IMF that intervention to support market function would end at close of business on Friday 14 October, saying the Bank never intended that bond-buying would become a permanent backstop.²⁸ One Bank insider said that the Governor had 'repeated the cut-off date to force the funds to sell gilts to the bank and recapitalize'. Bailey had become deeply concerned by what he had been hearing at the IMF, with talk about a major loss of confidence in Britain among the G7. 'He had very senior people in the IMF and World Bank community telling him that Britain was letting down the G7, and if a major crisis was to be averted, it needed to put its house in order,' said a Bank official. Bailey worried that if he extended the purchasing beyond 14 October, it would jeopardize the Bank's status as an independent institution, and he also believed that the immediate LDI crisis would have been resolved by then. After all, the heart of the crisis was not about LDIs, but a loss of confidence in Britain's fiscal architecture.

'Nothing that Andrew Bailey said on that Tuesday was out of line with what he had said all along,' said one of the Bank's senior leadership, who argued that the time-limited decision on the intervention was taken not by Bailey alone, but by the Bank's senior leadership as a whole. Turbulence was magnified, the Bank believed, by a rogue article in the *Financial Times* suggesting that the Bank's intervention might continue after 14 October. 'We could only speculate about [their] motives,' said a Bank source.²⁹ Tuesday continued to be a very difficult day with market turbulence. 'The basic issue was the credibility of the government: the markets no longer had faith they had the will or capability to do what was needed,' said a Treasury source.

Truss's economic adviser Shabbir Merali, who had been gaining ground against Matt Sinclair, had been regularly talking about the sterling and gilt crisis with his opposite number in Kwarteng's team, Adam Memon. Conscious of the almost total ignorance in No. 10, the Treasury and Cabinet Office about how financial markets actually operated, the two decided they should speak to a wide range of people in the City and beyond about what had caused the crisis and how best to respond. That Monday and Tuesday, they started making phone calls. Robert Stheeman, longstanding head of the Debt Management Office, an executive agency of the Treasury, impressed on them his concerns about what might happen to demand for gilts: with the Bank of England intervention finishing on 14 October, there was a potential risk of a 'doom loop scenario' with a gilt sale failing altogether, which would have been perilous. Traders told Merali and Memon that the UK was at risk of heading towards a sovereign debt crisis. A regular message they heard was that the best way to restore confidence would be to reverse the corporation tax change. 'The Treasury knew it made sense, but they were still not advising the Chancellor to reverse it because of the fear of saying anything critical about a central plank of their policy,' said an aide. 'Despite good interim leadership after Scholar left, it was evident that there was a vacuum in leadership till his successor was in post,' said another. The Treasury, in part as a result of negativity from recent PMs, had lost confidence in itself and some of its best minds. No. 10 too was critically short of senior figures with expert economic and financial knowledge, or a Treasury background (for good reason the PM's principal private secretary traditionally had been a Treasury official but not since May and Johnson).

Wednesday was a bruising day for Truss in Parliament. She had PMQs at midday, where Starmer accused her of 'a kamikaze Budget' and asked, 'Who voted for this?' At one point, he asked her whether she still stuck by her pledge not to cut public spending. 'Absolutely,' she replied. Truss then defended her plans, telling the House that she 'will make sure that, over the medium term, the debt is falling, and we will do that not by cutting public spending but by making sure we spend public money well'.³⁰

Conservative MPs were unimpressed by her performance. Later that day, she was confronted by Tory MPs in a 1922 Committee meeting. The atmosphere was extraordinarily tense.³¹ MPs asked how exactly she planned to pay for the tax cuts without spending reductions. Another MP asked her what would happen to promised infrastructure projects, a question that she struggled to answer. ‘It obviously just dawned on her that these things are going to need more money,’ an MP told the *Observer*.³² In one intervention, Robert Halfon accused her of having ‘trashed’ the work of Conservative leaders to win over working-class voters. ‘It was embarrassing,’ he later said. ‘MP after MP lined up to denigrate her.’³³ Outside the room, Tory MPs told reporters that the meeting had been ‘funereal’ and that she had been ‘just appalling’.³⁴

Back at No. 10, the more they heard, the more Merali and Memon became worried. ‘We thought we had a week for government to come up with a financial framework that would convince the markets. We were told that the markets were already pricing in that the government was going to reverse Mini-Budget measures, and if it didn’t, there would be a double blow,’ said one. By Wednesday afternoon, with two days left before the Bank intervention ended on 14 October, they concluded that there was no viable route out of the predicament without major policy reversals, and that they didn’t see the plan being advocated by either ministers or officials. Among the latter, they were aware of Case’s concerns, but were not sure how quickly the newly appointed Bowler would be able to seize the reins. They worried too that, puzzlingly, ‘the centre of government, bar a few isolated voices in the Treasury and in the Cabinet Office’s Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat, was not really on top of all that was happening in the markets’.

Jamie Hope, despite being Truss’s head of policy, had been excluded from the economic developments, and invited neither to review the documents nor attend meetings. He was becoming ‘terrified’ by watching what he had seen unfolding on the No. 10 television screens. He shared his concerns that afternoon with Merali: ‘I’m worried about all this. We really need to talk about it.’

‘Let’s do so. So am I,’ Merali replied. ‘We’ve been speaking to traders who work in the financial markets and they’re telling us that if nothing happens, they’re going to start betting against us when the markets open next Monday.’

‘There’s no urgency round here. It’s f**king weird,’ Hope said.

‘We’ve been hearing that the financial markets have got no confidence in Liz. No confidence in the economic policy.’

‘What can we do?’

‘Someone’s going to have to tell the Prime Minister. She won’t like it but she needs to know.’

At that point, they were joined by fellow special adviser Alex Boyd, who was told that Truss and Kwarteng were thinking they could still sort out the black hole with severe cuts. ‘We’ve been told that they’re looking at stopping cancer treatment on the NHS,’ they told him.

‘Is she being serious?’ Boyd asked.

‘She’s lost the plot,’ they replied. ‘She’s shouting at everyone – at us and officials that we’ve “got to find the money!” When we tell her it can’t be done, she shouts back, “It’s not true. The money is there. You go and find it.”’

A note to Truss laying out their collective concerns seemed the best way forward. Merali thought they should bring in Memon, who suggested they write the note in No. 11 for privacy. Finding £72 billion was a tall order: they estimated that Osborne in his austerity drive from 2010 to 2015 ‘only’ made cuts of some £30 billion in total.

‘It’s not going to happen, is it?’ concluded one.

‘Even if the cuts were announced, the markets won’t believe them and our position would only weaken,’ said another.

‘And they would never get cuts that size through Parliament,’ said another.

‘There’ll have to be some change of personnel. The markets won’t believe it if Kwarteng announces the cuts: he’ll never be able to stand up and reverse them.’

This was the elephant in the room.

‘But if he goes, her authority goes with him. And she will go too,’ said Hope.

A long silence followed.

‘How long does she have?’ one of them asked.

‘As long as Christmas,’ Boyd said.

‘It’s all over, isn’t it?’ said another.

The question did not need an answer. For a while, the four sat around the table silently taking in the magnitude of what they had been saying.

‘Come on. Let’s get the note written,’ said one. On Merali’s laptop they hammered out the document for Truss, just two pages of A4. The first part had the evidence from conversations that Merali and Memon had been having with the market experts about why they thought a meltdown could happen on Monday 17 October, and the second part, a list of options for the Prime Minister to decide.

The document presented to Truss has come to light and is one of the most remarkable documents ever penned by a Prime Minister’s advisers. It lists the points tersely on both sides of a single crumpled page.

It begins with a summary of ‘trusted market feedback received’:

1. The market wide view is if the MTFP [Medium-Term Fiscal Plan] on 31 Oct is not credible there is a serious risk of a financial/sovereign debt crisis.
2. Markets will not believe that we will be able get through this level of spending cuts. They don’t believe that we won’t reverse course in the face of NHS pressures etc and that we will be able to get this through the parliamentary party.
3. They assume that we have no choice but to reverse corporation tax at the very least they say, if we are to do it, sooner is better than later.
4. 31 Oct is a very long time away, and there is a serious risk of extreme market volatility before then. It’s not clear that we will last that long before we are forced to act on account of deteriorating market conditions.

It advised a ‘pivot’ because ‘our overriding objective is growth. The way yields are rising, there is no route to growth without financial stability. A financial crisis would choke off growth for several years and lead to long term financial scarring’.

The document then went through a list of options for tax rises, including reversing the cut to Corporation tax and several other mini budget policies. It listed the amounts of money this would raise. All told, these measures would raise some £36 billion, but that was still not enough.

It then proposed several ways to reduce spending by £36 billion. These included focusing ‘cuts on non-growth measures’ in departmental expenditure, as well as reviewing the triple lock on pensions, the state pension age, the winter fuel allowance and child benefit. It concluded that the next steps were to ‘Reverse cuts. Calm markets. Deliver credible MTFP. Supply side reform. Increase headroom for March forecast.’

The question now was who should deliver the memo to Truss. The obvious person was Kwarteng, but he was in Washington and they worried he would try to dismiss their concerns. ‘Our worry was that if he got to her first, he would convince her that the threat of a sovereign debt crisis wasn’t real and that the problem would go away,’ said one adviser. ‘If that happens, it may take years to recover,’ said Memon. Who else then should break the news? The next obvious person was Coffey in her capacity as DPM, but she was discounted because they didn’t believe that she grasped the complexity of what was at stake financially. They were running out of options. Where were the grown-ups? Hope suggested Fullbrook who, as chief of staff, was the next most senior. He was at a reception in the Drawing Rooms upstairs. Hope sidled up to him sheepishly at about 8 p.m.

‘Can I have a minute?’

‘Sure.’

Out of earshot of the guests, Hope told him, ‘I think you need to come to the Chancellor’s dining room, Mark. We need to talk to you urgently about the economy.’

‘Give me fifteen minutes, and I’ll be with you.’

He showed up shortly afterwards, ‘which seemed like an interminable time when the economy was starting to resemble Venezuela’s’, as one recalled.

Merali and Memon at once launched into telling him about their conversations with traders, the debt crisis and the consequences for the economy.

Silence. They had absolutely no idea how he might respond.

‘Well, she’s f**ked then, isn’t she?’ they recall him saying, quick as ever to assess political reality. Fullbrook might not have been the finished article as No. 10’s chief of staff, but his political nous was peerless. ‘Why doesn’t she realize how bad it is?’ he enquired.

They replied that the Treasury were not telling her fully what might happen: the position was a lot more serious than they or No. 10 appreciated.

‘Well, I will see that she’s told about it. Even if she says I don’t care, there’s a moral duty to tell her,’ he told them. There were murmurs of agreement across the table.

‘This is one of those moments that you remember for the rest of your life,’ he said, and he whipped out his phone to take a photograph with the conspirators.

The time on the image was 8.45 p.m.

It was agreed that the note should be presented at the team meeting the following morning. Pizzas were ordered at 9.30 p.m., and Merali and Memon were left polishing the wording of the brief note for Truss until almost midnight.

Elsewhere in the heart of Whitehall a parallel discussion had been taking place. Prime ministerial administrations can be dysfunctional, but none have been more dysfunctional than those overseen by Johnson and Truss. Often one part of Downing Street didn’t know what the other was doing. Not since the modern centre emerged under Lloyd George with the creation of the Cabinet Office in December 1916 had it been more chaotic. Case had remained on a state of high alert ever since the first weekend after the Mini-Budget. He recognized the country was in a potentially dangerous predicament. The Chancellor was out of the country, the Treasury was in an

unsteady position with its change of leader, and he was incensed by a leak to the press about possible changes in government policy. The worrier-in-chief wasn't yet contemplating talks with the warrior-in-chief, Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, but that moment might come. Certainly Britain's intelligence services were monitoring the developing financial situation and the potential hazards.

Earlier that Wednesday Case shared his concerns with Stein. 'The market position is very, very volatile,' he said, 'and I am concerned the PM is losing control of the party.' They talked about how she could strengthen her government: replacing Chief Whip Morton with Coffey, and bringing in Shapps as the Health Secretary were top of the agenda. They discussed the leak – Stein confirmed he thought it had come from the Treasury.³⁵

Merali and Memon arrived in the Thatcher Room at 9 a.m. on Thursday 13 October to find it already full of senior staff – Porter, Fullbrook, Stein, Sinclair and Jones. Several of them later recalled what was said. They reprised their arguments from the evening before, and repeated that if decisive action wasn't taken, they feared they could find themselves in 'a very bad position with no choices left'. Sinclair had already made known his deep scepticism about the scale of the danger and thus the disproportionality of their response. Porter asked searching questions, but was brought round by the end of the meeting. Stein, fresh from his conversations with Case, immediately understood the import of what was being said, and asked for more details. The meeting concluded with Porter saying that she would talk to Truss, who had already been spoken to by Fullbrook.

There was still a nervousness among the special advisers about whether the urgency had fully registered. Truss had been chatting with them first thing that morning. 'I hear you were busy last night talking to Mark about the economy. You're not supposed to be working on the economy, are you?' she said scornfully to one. She was clearly rattled and 'smirking unaccountably'. 'We were just trying to come up with some ideas to get out of the impasse,' they replied. 'I'm not cross with you if that's what you're worrying about,' she said, confusing them all, because evidently she was.

Hope searched out Catsaras and told him bluntly, 'The Prime Minister has got to reverse the corporation tax policy now.'

'There has to be a basis for doing so. It can't just be that you guys have now changed your mind,' he responded.

'Nick, you have got to tell her. You will get through to her.'

Several of Truss's aides had worked with James Bowler at International Trade, liked him and now pinned their faith on him.

So Catsaras called Bowler, now on his fourth day in the illustrious Treasury permanent secretary's office, and explained the urgency of the position as No. 10 saw it and the belief that reversing the policy on corporation tax would address it. 'Can you come urgently to talk to the PM in No. 10?' This was highly irregular, and they both knew it – the Treasury permanent secretary owes their primary allegiance to the Chancellor. The predicament tested the unwritten constitution to the very heart. 'Because we were worried the Treasury might leak Bowler's visit, we kept it confidential and basically smuggled him into the building,' said an aide. When he arrived at 10.30 a.m., Truss was sitting at the Cabinet table with senior staff.

'Prime Minister, the position is dire. We think you must listen to what James has to tell you,' said Stein.

'Prime Minister, it is highly unusual for the Treasury permanent secretary to brief the Prime Minister without the Chancellor present,' Bowler opened. 'In any previous administration if the permanent secretary to the Treasury spoke to the Prime Minister without the Chancellor present, it would be a sackable offence. I'm feeling extremely uncomfortable. But it seems your special advisers want me to tell you that you need to reverse the corporation tax policy.'

'I know what *they* think. What do *you* think?' she shot back at him with her intense stare.

Bowler shifted uncomfortably on his seat. He found himself in a near impossible position with his new masters; the Prime Minister and her Chancellor were clearly wedded to one policy, but his instincts told him the opposite. She sensed his discomfort. She turned to Merali, whose advice she was minded to rate above Sinclair's.

‘Shabbir, what do you think?’

‘I think that we must change the policy, Prime Minister,’ he said.

At that point, Bowler spoke out: ‘Prime Minister, the reason I’m here is because the people round the table believe you should change policy on corporation tax.’ Without expressly saying it, he indicated he saw the sense in the change. Those present describe it as ‘a really remarkable moment’.

The meeting broke up shortly afterwards. Truss’s team huddled together and apologized to Bowler for putting him through the ordeal. ‘It’s OK, let’s see what happens,’ he said before shooting back to the Treasury. After he left, Porter and Stein spoke to Truss in the Cabinet Room. ‘Do you think they are right?’ she asked them. ‘How can we know?’ they replied. ‘The problem is, they were probably right about the Mini-Budget too, and I didn’t listen,’ she said, in a rare moment of vulnerability and honesty.

Truss was unhappy and she tried to get Kwarteng back from Washington a day early. ‘No, I can’t come back, Liz, because if I do so, it will cause more turbulence,’ he told her. He was worried that it would be worse ‘if one panics and overacts in a crisis’, he reflected later. ‘This was deeply baked into me. Second World War veterans in my constituency used to say that if you’re going to die, keep calm to the end.’³⁶

Catsaras spoke to Case, who was himself rapidly getting up to speed with what had been happening that morning. The leak that corporation tax would be reversed had led to the markets calming, but also an expectation that Truss would make the change. She was in torment. In one ear, almost her entire team at No. 10 advised her to junk the policies as quickly as possible, as did figures such as Rupert Harrison, former right-hand man to Osborne; in the other ear, she had the old guard urging her to revert to Fortress Liz mentality. The revanchists appeared to be winning.

‘She swatted the idea away and said it was ridiculous,’ said an aide. They had played their James Bowler trump card, and it appeared to have failed. So Catsaras said to Case, ‘We need to work out if this is a genuine problem or not, and do so face-to-face.’ Case insisted the outlook was potentially so grave he should contact Bailey at the Bank of England. ‘Andrew,’ he said, ‘I need, for the record, to ask your advice on the state of

the markets.’ The Governor told him there had been significant volatility not least in the last couple of hours in the UK gilt markets, and if the corporation tax change didn’t go ahead, given the assumption it would, things could be ‘very bumpy’. After the call, Case told Catsaras he was going to write him an official letter laying out the substance of the conversation. He wrote that Bailey thought there would be ‘significant evidence of volatility if the change didn’t go ahead and that the underlying improvement of the bank’s market operations would also be jeopardised’. Catsaras then showed Truss the letter at 5.30 p.m. They were alone in the office at the end of the Cabinet Room.

‘Nick, you are organizing a Bank and Whitehall conspiracy against me,’ she told him in that ambiguous tone of voice that is either teasing or menacing.

‘You need to read the letter first, Prime Minister, before you dismiss the judgement.’

She did, but she was still leaning towards not changing direction. The Brexit Praetorian Guard – including John Redwood and Bill Cash – were telling her to hold her ground. Redwood said that he’d spoken to friends in the markets and there was nothing to worry about – that it was all the fault of the Bank of England. They warned of the political risks of a U-turn. Chief Secretary to the Treasury Chris Philp, who, in Kwarteng’s absence abroad, was her most senior finance minister on the ground, also counselled sticking to her guns. One of her ministers wrote to her saying that there was no risk of a run on the pound, and that pension managers would make their decisions on Monday, not Friday. He thought that there was no need to panic, and a U-turn would not significantly alter the market reaction. Hold the line. ‘Treasury officials were doing strange things behind Kwasi’s back. Liz was panicking and pivoting on the back of a sixpence, having been wound up by his officials,’ one minister later said.

The Verdict: Maintain a Reputation for Economic Competence?

The country faced the most precarious financial position since the global financial crisis of 2008. The risk was that, if Truss didn't change direction, the markets would have started melting down when they opened in Asia on Sunday evening, with sterling being sold alongside government debt, and a full-scale crisis unfolding. But whatever she did now, any reputation she, or her party, had for economic competence was long gone.

Truss had spectacularly failed on the eighth requirement for a successful premiership: financial and economic competence. There were just seven days before she was to announce her resignation.

Then, at nine o'clock that evening, Catsaras received a summons to the No. 10 flat.



Rule Number Nine: Avoid major U-turns. Jeremy Hunt shreds the mini budget to restore market confidence, Monday 17 October

9

AVOID U-TURNS

13–17 October 2022

‘OK, I’m going to do it,’ Truss told her startled senior advisers who had just rushed up the stairs to the PM’s flat on the evening of Thursday 13 October. ‘I’m going to reverse it.’

‘Very well, Prime Minister.’

‘And... that’s not all I’m going to do.’

U-turns and Prime Ministers

Liz Truss was just about to initiate the quickest U-turn on a major policy in British prime ministerial history. Changing course is always painful for leaders. While flexing on a position in the light of fresh circumstances can be seen as courageous leadership, reversing direction on a major policy quickly or repeatedly makes them look weak and indecisive. People think either the leader made the wrong decisions implementing the policy in the first place or they failed to have the grit to stick by it under pressure. Those who supported the policy in public feel betrayed.

Thatcher knew this in her bones, another stark contrast between her and Truss. One year in from election victory in 1979, she was under great stress with her economic policy, and her monetarist Chancellor Geoffrey Howe was out of step with most economic commentators and many Tory MPs. With unemployment reaching an unprecedented 2 million, a level not seen since the 1930s, the atmosphere was tense. She was under pressure to change course within her own Cabinet from the ‘wets’. Even former Prime Minister Harold Macmillan wrote to her in private that summer advocating a return to ‘consensus politics’. He did not receive a reply.¹ But, on 10

October 1980, Thatcher's conference speech was defiant, and in a deliberate snub to her predecessor as Tory leader, Ted Heath, who had changed direction, she famously told delegates, 'You turn if you want to. The Lady's not for turning.' A few months later, she reshuffled her Cabinet, leaving it more sympathetic to her policies. But it was the speech, and these words, that became the anthem of every blue-blooded Conservative: true leaders do not U-turn.

Prime Ministers who have U-turned since 1945 have not fared well. In the early 1970s, Ted Heath carried out a significant U-turn: at the general election of 1970, he promised spending cuts, but faced with unemployment rising above 1 million for the first time since 1947, in 1972 he changed direction and started pouring money into the economy. It didn't help, and he was still defeated in the 1974 general election.

The Prime Minister can survive a U-turn with little damage if it's reversing a policy introduced by a predecessor, even if of the same party. Hence, after he came to power in November 1990, John Major abandoned Thatcher's deeply unpopular poll tax, which imposed a level taxation system, with the exact rate set by local authorities, replacing it with the council tax, based on property values. Major went on to win a general election in April 1992.

Tony Blair, though, became unstuck when he U-turned on one of his own policies. In the run-up to the 1997 general election he campaigned on a platform of promising not to introduce tuition fees for students in higher education. But the following year, he did exactly that, allowing universities to charge tuition fees up to £1,000 a year (later increased to £3,000 in 2004 then £9,000 after he stood down). His reputation for honesty suffered significant damage.

Theresa May managed almost to normalize U-turns, being responsible for nine significant *volte-faces* in her first year alone, on topics as diverse as Brexit, Hinkley Point nuclear power station, workers on corporate boards and ruling out an early general election.² Then in the general election, she made her most spectacular about-face on her policy on social care laid out in the manifesto. Her series of U-turns played their part in the loss of

confidence that led to her standing down as Prime Minister after just under three years.

Prime ministerial history, distant and recent, provided a clear message for Liz Truss: don't launch a policy unless you're absolutely confident that you can see it through.

Dropping the Chancellor: 13–14 October 2022

By mid-afternoon on Thursday 13 October, Truss had begun to think she would have to concede on corporation tax. Or not. Messages had been pouring into Downing Street that she needed to go even further: a change of personnel might be needed too. At 6 p.m., she convened a meeting of her top party figures around the Cabinet table including Thérèse Coffey, past and present Party Chairs Brandon Lewis and Jake Berry, and Deputy Chief Whip Craig Whittaker, flanked by her senior special advisers. One by one, she went round the table and said, 'I'm going to have to change gear on corporation tax. Do I need to go further?' Lewis and Whittaker backed each other up agreeing 'someone's got to go'. 'Really? Who?' she asked. The latter announced boldly, 'Kwasi.' Others quickly jumped in to protest. Whittaker, who was being seen as the Chief Whip in all but name, responded, 'If it's not him, it'll be you, Prime Minister.' When Lewis backed him up she really started to listen. The strongest voice on the other side were the advisers, worried that if Kwasi fell, it would be 'too explosive' and prove the end not just of the 'Truss project', but her as well. And then. Truss listened carefully and concluded, 'I'll go away and have a think.' Most present felt she had still not made up her mind.

At 10 p.m., up in the flat, she told Catsaras, 'I'm going to do more than scrap the corporation tax change. I'm going to change the Chancellor as well.'

'That's your decision, Prime Minister, but I don't think it's absolutely necessary.'

'Senior ministers have advised me he has to go,' she replied, not wanting to divulge the names.

Later that evening, about 10.30 p.m., Simon McGee, who as Truss's joint director of communications was responsible for breaking news stories, became aware of Kwarteng's likely dismissal. 'This is a great mistake,' he told those still left in the Private Office. 'Why?' 'Because it is absolutely bloody obvious that he has done her bidding.' McGee was troubled. 'Let me see her to see if I can help her to rethink the decision,' he said. 'She's made up her mind and there's no point now in trying to change it,' they responded.³ Not for the first time he was left thinking why on earth he had accepted doing a job that she made it impossible to do. It was left to Fullbrook to tell it like it was: 'It was absolutely obvious: either she had to go, or he had to go. It was that simple. Someone had to take the hit.'⁴

After a night worrying about whether she was making the right decision, Truss saw Fullbrook early the next morning to tell him and then she saw Catsaras. The deed must be done! 'A judgement call. I decided that given that I was having to reverse everything I'd done, it would've been very hard for him to do it with conviction,' she said later.⁵ Dismissing any senior Cabinet minister is a big deal, far more so if it's the Chancellor of the Exchequer and it's in the middle of a major financial crisis. As the PM's principal private secretary, Catsaras had to inform the Palace, the Cabinet secretary and prepare the whole system for the massive imminent electric jolt.

Truss had three immediate headaches: telling Kwarteng he was fired; choosing an alternative; and working out what to do if her first choice declined. She knew that any of these three going wrong could break her.

Kwarteng had been picking up some concerning messages on Thursday 13 October at the IMF conference in Washington. Lynn Davidson, former special adviser and friend, rang him to say, 'Watch out, Kwasi: there's a rumour circulating that you're about to be sacked. Sajid to take over.' Another special adviser, Cameron Brown, then called him to say Truss has been talking furtively to MPs about who might replace him. 'Resign, Kwasi, walk away, apologize and take the hit. It will be better for you and better for the government,' his young media adviser said. 'No need,' he replied breezily. 'She won't be so stupid as to sack me because she knows

that if I go, she will have to go too.’ He saw himself as her ‘Kevlar body armour’, and if that was stripped away, there would be nothing to stop the bullets hitting her.⁶ So he was still a reasonably confident Chancellor when he boarded the last flight out of Dulles Airport on the Thursday evening, bound for London.

He landed at Heathrow at 10.30 a.m. on Friday 14 October, ‘the first time I had a motorcade waiting for me on the tarmac, and the last,’ he recalled. When he switched on his phone, his messages were not encouraging. As the car was setting off to whisk him to Downing Street, fellow passenger Celia McSwaine, another of his advisers, called one of Truss’s aides: ‘What’s going on? Kwasi has asked me to call.’ ‘What has he heard?’ ‘There is speculation all over the media. He wants to know – is he on the road just to come in to be sacked?’ At that point Kwarteng himself grabbed the phone. ‘She’s going to sack me, isn’t she? I want to know the truth. What the hell’s happening?’ he demanded. ‘I agree it’s mad,’ said the adviser. McSwaine took back the phone while Kwarteng, demonstrably in a deep rage, chuntered away in the background for the rest of the call. He had already tried ringing Coffey. She hadn’t picked up as Truss had sent out the instruction to her inner circle not to tell or speak to anyone. He felt as if he had already become persona non grata.

It was 11 a.m. and an atmosphere of deep gloom had enveloped the back of the car. As the convoy glided round Chiswick roundabout still twenty minutes from Downing Street, Steve Swinford of *The Times* released some jaw-dropping news. He had earlier on tweeted that Truss was on the verge of junking parts of the Mini-Budget. ‘No. 10 then went into full submarine mode, which is always a sign that something is in the offing. Within minutes of tweeting that news, a trusted source got in touch, confirmed by a second source who had never been wrong, telling me it wasn’t just the Budget measures that were going – Truss was sacking Kwarteng as well,’ Swinford said later.⁷ McSwaine broke it to her boss that she had just picked up Swinford’s latest tweet. It said: ‘I’m told that Kwasi Kwarteng is being sacked as Chancellor as Liz Truss prepares to reverse the mini-Budget. Not clear who will be replacing him. Events moving very,

very quickly this morning. No. 10 not commenting.’⁸ ‘If Steve tweeted it, it will be true,’ McSwaine said, even though for an hour and more, no other media outlet covered it. Kwarteng concurred. They assumed that either Stein or Porter had briefed it. ‘Just doing their jobs. Looking after top dog. It’s what they do,’ he thought ruefully. Others close to Truss thought that the leak came from Case himself to ensure that there would be no going back, a view strongly denied.

Truss herself was highly emotional and conflicted. One of her closest allies described her as ‘very, very upset at the imminent sacking of her closest and oldest ally and replacing him by someone who would reverse her policies’. As she sat waiting in the Cabinet Room, the corner of her mouth froze, as it could do in moments of high tension, and she spoke from the other side. ‘She couldn’t sit still: she got up, she sat down, she walked around feverishly trying to burn off energy,’ recalled one present. Regular updates were given of the progress of Kwarteng’s car: Hammersmith flyover, Cromwell Road, Hyde Park Corner, closer and closer the Chancellor came. As she paced around, she repeatedly shook her shoulders and balled both fists. Up and down she went at an increasing tempo. After what seemed like an interminable wait, the diary secretary popped her head round the door to say, ‘The Chancellor is going to be here any minute.’ Someone said, ‘Can we give the Prime Minister the room?’

The Chancellor’s car drove into Downing Street at 11.35 a.m. He dropped his bags inside the door of No. 11 and walked straight into No. 10, down the long corridor and into the Cabinet Room at the end. The PM was on her own, visibly emotional, tears in her eyes. ‘You’ve got to go,’ she blurted out, choking.

‘I know, I saw it on Steve Swinford’s Twitter,’ Kwarteng replied.

‘I’m very sorry you saw it like that. You can come back in a year.’

Kwarteng was lost for words, thinking the whole predicament was insane, not least her even imagining she would still be Prime Minister in a year. He stood in front of her in total bewilderment. He considered arguing against her, but he could see that there was no point: her mind was made up.

‘It’s been a really difficult time. Graham Brady says you have to go,’ Truss told him.

‘Who replaces me?’

‘Jeremy Hunt.’

‘I’m very surprised.’ He had assumed it was going to be Sajid Javid.

‘Would you like to see the text of my statement I’m going to be making?’

‘Yes, I would.’ He spent three minutes reading it. ‘The first question you will get asked by journalists is why you are getting rid of someone who you campaigned with on these policies.’

‘I know.’

‘They will come for you.’

Truss looked at him blankly, alternating between silence and words that were not entirely coherent. After twenty minutes the meeting broke up.

‘So, good luck. Watch out,’ he said when leaving.

‘They are already coming for me.’

Kwarteng walked out numb. The thought kept running through his mind that coups happened when Presidents were abroad, as sometimes happened in West Africa where his parents came from. He mulled over who might have been responsible for his departure: the Treasury? Simon Case? The 1922 Committee? ‘He wasn’t certain, but it felt like the establishment reasserting itself,’ said an aide.

Rishi Sunak was one of the first to call him when the announcement was officially made, saying, ‘Kwasi, I’m so sorry to hear this terrible news.’ He appreciated the words, but he also surmised this was Sunak’s way of sniffing out how long he thought Truss had before she collapsed altogether. Hunt called on Saturday, a courtesy call, uttering no words of significance; they were not buddies, but had a respectful relationship. Kwarteng resolved to keep his own counsel, but a careless comment to a *Times* journalist resulted in the headline in the print edition that went up promptly online: ‘Kwasi Kwarteng thinks Liz Truss will be gone in weeks’.⁹

The loss of a Chancellor so quickly was devastating and historically unprecedented. While Iain Macleod, Heath’s intellectually brilliant

Chancellor, served a shorter period at just thirty days, chain-smoking had combined with a war wound to shorten his life: he had a heart attack while in No. 11 and died an hour later, depriving Heath and the country of a masterful politician who might well have obviated the need for the fateful U-turn two years later. Kwarteng with thirty-eight days was the shortest-serving Chancellor to leave office alive in the 300 years since the PM's office was created. Comment since Truss fell has concentrated on her own transience: in reality, the brevity of the Chancellor, and the combination of both, were remarkable as well. Nadhim Zahawi came next on the list, serving sixty-three days in Johnson's twilight zone over the summer of 2022. Next up was Javid who served 204 days, and only then do figures from further back appear again: Stanley Baldwin (307 days) and Peter Thorneycroft (358 days). All other Chancellors served at least a year.¹⁰

Hunt for the New Chancellor: 14 October 2022

Truss's second and third problems were who to appoint in Kwarteng's place, and what happened if she couldn't find anyone, a serious possibility.

Before she took the plunge and removed Kwarteng from his post, her team had prepared a shortlist for her. The most obvious candidate was Javid, who had declared for her in the leadership contest, and hence was at least nominally on side. He had the credibility to stabilize the markets as a former Chancellor, albeit for only nine months and never delivering a Budget. 'Had I been offered it, I would have accepted for the very same reasons of public service that Jeremy Hunt did, as was the case when I took Health Secretary,' he later said.¹¹ Despite widespread speculation on Thursday, Truss never asked him. Neither Porter nor Stein were keen on him, but the decision against was totally the PM's. There was no love lost between them and she thought his declaration of support had been skin deep at best. Ideologically and temperamentally, they were miles apart.

Zahawi was briefly considered as he too had been Chancellor and the chemistry worked better. She would have hated to lose him as her man overseeing delivery in his role as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster –

she had great faith in him and he had proven himself on the Vaccine Task Force – but she would have gone with him were it not for the downside. He had only been Chancellor for nine weeks in the dying days of Johnson. Questions were asked: would he really have the credibility and experience to provide the reassurance that the markets sought? Alok Sharma, most recently president of COP26, and a former Business Secretary, was on the list; but again, he was felt to lack credibility with the markets, and Truss did not get on well with him. So it was back to the drawing board.

Any former Chancellor might theoretically have fitted the bill. But who else was there? Zahawi's predecessor was Sunak, who would have been a humiliation too far even for her, even if he accepted it. Before him was Javid, already ruled out, and before him Hammond and Osborne, neither still in the House of Commons. A Chief Secretary to the Treasury might just possibly have had the credibility, but neither Philp nor his predecessor Clarke had the gravitas, and none of those before were in tune with her. That left Jacob Rees-Mogg, who for all his hunger for the job was not considered because he was known to be an even more devout believer than Kwarteng, and far less biddable. John Redwood was a name that put a twinkle in her eye. 'I'd have liked Jacob or John,' she admitted, 'but the truth is that the markets wouldn't have gone for either of them. Neither of them would have signalled a change and the economic establishment wouldn't have approved.'¹²

That left one person who had not supported her, but who had been in Cabinet continuously from May 2010 until Johnson failed to give him a job in July 2019 – Jeremy Hunt. Truss immediately warmed to the idea when her aides proposed him. On the upside, she respected him as an accomplished minister who had always been straight with her; he had credibility because of the posts he had filled including Foreign Secretary; and he would help bring on side the centre left of the party. They also agreed on some things, such as increasing defence spending and taking a tough line against China. On the downside was the inconvenient fact that he had voted for Sunak in the leadership election. In discussions with her advisers, she had been wont to describe him as 'boring', and regarded him

as the leader of the ‘wets’, as she termed them. But the clinching argument in his favour was that he was deemed to be the most credible bet to steady the markets, and to help bind the party together. ‘It was really quite calculated: she thought the perception of Jeremy was that she wouldn’t be able to push him around, as she had Kwarteng,’ said an aide. But would he agree?

Having alighted on him, Truss relaxed a little for the first time in days. She knew she could only sack Kwarteng if she was 100 per cent sure of a credible successor. What could possibly go wrong? She leaped into action, summoning an official into her office: ‘We have the plan now. I’m going to sack Kwasi.’ ‘Right, Prime Minister. Do you have a plan on who to appoint as his successor? He will need to be locked in before you sack him.’

‘I do. Jeremy Hunt.’

‘Does he know about it?’

‘He’s in Brussels with his wife apparently.’

‘Does he know it’s coming? Has he said yes?’

‘I am going to speak to him this morning, but we’ve been sounding him out.’

‘And are you sure it’s going to work out?’

The truth is that she wasn’t, but she explained that Porter had used a back channel to contact an ex-aide of Hunt’s and alluding to Truss ‘wanting him for a senior role and would he be willing to take the time out to take her call’.

‘Liz Truss here. Please call.’ Jeremy Hunt was still in his bedroom at the Amigo Hotel in Brussels with his wife Lucia getting ready for the day ahead when the reception called with the message at 9.30 a.m. local time (one hour ahead of the UK). At that point, Kwarteng was still in the air, two hours from landing at Heathrow. Hunt was irritated, thinking it a hoax, and wondered how he had been tracked down. Then his mobile phone started vibrating: ‘No Caller ID’. Assuming it was a journalist, he promptly declined it. But then Edward Jones, the former special adviser whom Porter had contacted, called him to say ‘No. 10 are trying to get hold of you.’ Still suspicious, he called the No. 10 switchboard, saying, ‘It may be a hoax, but

I've had a message that in five minutes the Prime Minister wants to speak to me.' 'She does indeed, Mr Hunt, but she's on the other line.' He waited, speculating why she wanted to get hold of him. Whatever it might be, he thought, it didn't merit disturbing him on holiday.

'Hello, Jeremy, it's Liz here.'

'Thank you for calling,' he replied politely.

'Things are not going as well as I hoped.'

'And how can I help, Prime Minister?'

She replied in just one word: 'Chancellor.'

Hunt was stunned. As an aide said, 'Jeremy had a perfectly cordial relationship with Liz, but he was no admirer.' He had no idea how to respond. 'Can I have half an hour to think it through and talk to the family?'

She responded again with just one word: 'Fine.' The line went dead.

He was in a complete quandary with no idea what to do. So he spoke to the two people closest to him, first Lucia, and then his younger brother Charlie.

The conversations clarified for him what was at stake: if he accepted, he would have to resign as Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee, a role he greatly valued, and might not get the position back. The government might not last long and he might be dragged down with it. Was he being set up as the fall guy? On the other hand, he saw the opportunity to do something of national significance. His mind went back to his battles with the Treasury in his seven years as Health Secretary. He thought, 'I'm out of office now: I might not have another opportunity, and this is in the national interest.' So twenty minutes later, he called her back to accept her offer. 'Thank you,' she said, giving away very little of how she was feeling.

Had he said no, there was no Plan B. Javid was the only possible show in town, and she'd already vetoed him. She would have fallen that morning with the news that Kwasi was going had she had no one to replace him, the country on the verge of a financial catastrophe on the coming Monday. So in accepting the job, a significant shift in power was immediately apparent. Like William Pitt the Elder or Lord Palmerston when they experienced their

own career-changing moments, Hunt had, in a heartbeat, become the most important person in the government.

When he woke up that morning, he was an ageing politician on his way down; suddenly, he alone was propping up the Prime Minister in the midst of what risked becoming ‘the worst market crisis since 1976’ according to Nick Macpherson, former Treasury permanent secretary.¹³ Could the odd couple ever have lasted together? ‘We had absolutely no plan to junk him after a certain time. Heavens. If someone lends you a lifeboat, you’re not going to sink the ship,’ said Fullbrook. ‘It was never going to save the Truss project. It was only designed to stop the project hitting the rocks there and then.’¹⁴

Back in Brussels, Hunt broke the news to Lucia that their holiday was over, and that she might not be seeing much of him for quite some time. They took the first Eurostar to St Pancras, and then a taxi to No. 10. By then, the news of Kwarteng’s sacking was breaking. ‘Thank you for appointing me Chancellor’, were his opening words in his short meeting with the Prime Minister. ‘You have a completely free hand to do anything you think you need to do,’ she told him again. He hadn’t expected to be given quite that degree of *carte blanche*, and was relieved and impressed. ‘Jeremy was struck that she appeared to have no cunning plan of her own, but was genuinely in total survival mode,’ said a Treasury aide.

That evening, Hunt went to the Treasury for the first time to take up the job he had long craved. ‘I’m going to reverse most if not all of the Mini-Budget, as I said to the Prime Minister,’ he told the assembled company after he had been clapped in by the Private Office, as is the custom for incoming Chancellors. ‘I want you all to help me work out how far I should go, and when I should make the announcements,’ political adviser Adam Smith recalled him saying.¹⁵ As he settled down between 5 and 7 p.m. at the large table in the Chancellor’s office with his senior officials and aides, he knew he had just forty-eight hours before the Asian markets opened on Sunday night, and with the Bank’s support ending this very day, market turmoil and even meltdown was the fear.

Hunt had never held an economic portfolio and was aware he was not in a strong position technically, given the urgency, to query the advice from officials. Officials found themselves in uncharted waters, but how unequivocal should they be? None had a closer grasp of markets than Clare Lombardelli, who, given the Chancellor's invitation to speak out, felt she should not hold back. 'My strong advice is that you reverse all the measures and do it on Monday. That will be the most effective way to resolve it: do the measures quickly,' she told him. 'She was worried that unless he acted very decisively and strongly, given the failure of the adjustments so far to make much impact, the instability in the markets could just go on and on,' said one present.

Since the phone call from Truss that morning, he had been reflecting deeply on what to do. Two of the figures who were to influence him most to go far and fast had been at the heart of Cameron's No. 10, the Treasury's chief economist Clare Lombardelli (who had been Cameron's private secretary for economic affairs), and Osborne's chief of staff, Rupert Harrison.

The latter had been in regular communication with Stein since the day before. They spoke at 4.30 p.m. 'What would you advise?' Stein asked. 'You need to junk most of the package and signal very clearly that you get it,' said Harrison without a moment's hesitation. They texted at 9.30 on the Friday morning. 'Gilt yields are plunging – shows the impact you can have. Does mean a fair amount of the u-turn is now getting priced in... if expectations now get disappointed markets will react pretty badly,' Harrison messaged him, warning that they would need to go further still if they were to avoid a potentially catastrophic reaction on the markets.

'Congratulations, Chancellor!' were his opening words to a surprised Hunt who called him at 11 that morning before any official announcement had been made of personnel changes at No. 11. 'I put two and two together: Kwarteng suddenly flying back from the IMF, and Jeremy calling me out of the blue. It could only have been that he was to be the new Chancellor,' Harrison said later. 'You will have to go further to reassure the markets,' he advised Hunt on that call. 'I was telling him that he'll never be in a more

powerful position nor have more leverage than in that first forty-eight hours, that he will need to move quickly and kill off the vast majority of the unfunded package. My worry was that if the markets were still not reassured by the change to corporation tax and by the change of Chancellor, then much better to get ahead of the curve than be forced into it later, which he inevitably would be.’¹⁶

While Hunt was talking to his new team on Friday evening, a story broke on Bloomberg that Truss had secured agreement from Hunt that there would be ‘no further U-turns’. The story spooked those pressing for a wholesale Mini-Budget reversal because they knew that when the markets reopened, they would react badly to the notion that there was still life in the ‘Truss project’. If the leak had been designed to put a stop to the rot, it had the opposite effect: it made Hunt and all of the same persuasion determined to go for broke.

The End of the Project: 14–17 October 2022

For Truss, the torture of a press conference in the No. 9 Downing Street press briefing room came next. Adding to her vulnerability was the absence of her political team who had left for Adam Jones’s wedding in Yorkshire the next day. The remaining team planned the event to make her time on stage as short as possible to avoid the risk of particularly damaging questions and her own composure being exposed. Highly volatile and close to the edge as she was, her team were worrying whether she could hold it together.

Her statement, which lasted just four minutes, was designed to justify her continued presence at the helm. ‘My conviction that this country needs to go for growth is rooted in my personal experience,’ she started. But she accepted that Britain was suffering from global factors and ‘it is clear that parts of our Mini-Budget went further and faster than markets were expecting’. Then came the three bombshells of keeping the increase in corporation tax, sacking Kwarteng (‘I was incredibly sorry to lose him’) and appointing Hunt, ‘one of the most experienced and widely respected

government ministers and parliamentarians' (which begged the question why she hadn't appointed him to her Cabinet originally).¹⁷

'As Prime Minister I will always act in the national interest,' she said at the end, while admitting, in one of her best lines, 'I want to be honest, this is difficult.' She then selected questions from the media beginning with two newspapers she thought most likely to be friendly to her, before turning to the BBC and ITV, which normally take precedence. First up, Ben Riley-Smith from the *Telegraph* asked her, 'Can you explain to the public why you think you should still be Prime Minister?' The directness of the question took her aback. Because she was 'determined to see through what I have promised,' she replied. Second, Harry Cole from the *Sun* asked why, as she and Kwarteng had designed the Mini-Budget in lockstep and often in secret, 'how come you get to stay?' Again she reeled. If these questions were from two friendly journalists, what would happen when the neutrals started interrogating her? BBC political editor Chris Mason didn't disappoint: 'Excuse the bluntness, Prime Minister, but given everything that has happened, what credibility do you have to continue governing?' Finally, ITV News political editor Robert Peston quoted Philip Hammond at her, who had said she had 'totally trashed the Tory party's election winning reputation for economic competence', and asked her, 'Will you apologize to your party?' Three times in response to the questions she repeated that her goal was to maintain economic stability: she argued that had she quit, with further uncertainty of a leadership election compounding the financial instability, the result could have been dire. After four questions in four minutes, she left the stage to shouts of 'Aren't you going to say sorry?''¹⁸

She managed to retain a composure of sorts, but the event singularly failed to make the case for her continuing as Prime Minister. Given that she was reversing key planks of her leadership platform, and jettisoning her closest political ally, the press conference was never going to be anything other than deeply damaging. She never contemplated apologizing to her party as Peston had asked, and most of her answers appeared as if she was dissembling and not engaging with the reality of her position. No one in or

outside No. 10 thought she had acquitted herself well. But no one told her. She knew it.

That evening at seven o'clock, his two-hour meeting concluded, Hunt's immediate concerns 250 metres away at the Treasury were being briefed for Radio 4's *Today* programme the following morning, and for *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg* on BBC1. He was back in the building early on Saturday working with James Bowler and officials unpicking the Mini-Budget. 'It was taken for granted he couldn't delay decisions till the Autumn Statement that Kwarteng had promised for the end of October, two weeks away,' said one present. But could it even wait one week?

One of his first moves was to replace Chris Philp as Chief Secretary. He initially wanted to promote the like-minded Mel Stride in his place, but Truss did not care for Stride and vetoed his appointment: 'Absolutely not.' Hunt then suggested Osborne's former adviser Rupert Harrison, but he was neither an MP nor a Peer, and it would be politically difficult. Finally, he settled on MP Edward Argar, who was destined to hold the role for only a week.

The senior team at the Treasury worked separately throughout Saturday morning while Hunt did several interviews, and a prerecorded interview for Laura Kuenssberg's Sunday morning show, giving the clear message of reassurance that there would be further measures to ensure stability. Courtesy calls had to be made as well, primarily to Bank Governor Andrew Bailey and Richard Hughes at the OBR. He reassured Bailey, who was still in Washington, that stability was the priority, and they were still working out exactly what to say and when to say it. He spoke to Bailey again on his return to the UK the following day.

Hunt reconvened the team at 2 p.m. for two hours to work through all the Mini-Budget measures one by one. Bowler let Lombardelli do the talking about the state of the markets; she was equally emphatic as the night before. Hunt made his sensitivity to the feelings of the Prime Minister clear, but nevertheless announced that almost everything was to be reversed except National Insurance, which the Commons had already voted on, and stamp duty. 'Jeremy was insistent that radical action was needed and that

was why he would need to reverse most or all of the Mini-Budget,' said one present. 'The point he drilled home was we have to reassure the markets and that we must do whatever we need to do.' By mid-afternoon, the task was complete. Hunt then worked through a shortlist of people he wanted to talk to, to confirm what he was doing, including former Tory Chancellors Hammond and Osborne. Subsequently, he spoke to an earlier generation, including Major's two Chancellors Norman Lamont and Ken Clarke. Nigel Lawson's frailty alone prevented Hunt from speaking to Thatcher's radical Chancellor, now aged ninety and who died six months later.

In the car on his way home on Saturday afternoon, Hunt called Javid, an old friend, whose advice he sought not least because of his experience in financial markets. If Javid had indeed wanted the job, there was no trace of bitterness or regret. 'How worried should I be about the markets opening tomorrow night in Asia?' Hunt asked him. 'I think you should be very worried,' Javid replied.

As a result of the conversation with Javid, Hunt called Bowler. A witness recalled their conversation: 'Do you think we should advance the timing of my announcement?' 'I am not sure, Chancellor. I'd like to get some advice and talk to others. I'll find out,' the new permanent secretary told him. After Hunt arrived home in Surrey, his phone rang. It was Bowler. 'Chancellor, I have been speaking to people and my advice is there *is* a risk. We will need to announce the measures on Monday morning. We cannot wait till an Autumn Statement.' A conference call with officials followed at 8.30 p.m. to discuss whether the announcement should be made first in Parliament. Hunt was sensitive to MPs liking to be the first to hear important news, but as Parliament wasn't meeting till 3.30 p.m. on Monday, the consensus was it was too late. 'I need to deliver something earlier,' he said and the discussion moved on to how this could be done without offending Parliament, and the best means of him giving the message. The conclusion was that before the markets in London opened on Monday morning they should put out a prerecorded video by him from the Chancellor's office in the Treasury to calm the markets ahead of his announcement that afternoon in the Commons.

Truss's power was slipping away from her by the minute. So, like Tudor monarchs displaying their riches to show off their status to their subjects, Truss used the grandeur of Tudor country house Chequers on Sunday 16 October to remind her guests who was in charge. Case was surprised to find himself summoned to breakfast with her, and still more surprised when, rather than the heavyweight argument he had anticipated and feared, the conversation was chit-chat about family topics including children and the length of school half term just beginning. But they did refer to the impending meeting. Case told her, 'Jeremy is going to come up with a plan and you are going to have to accept it,' according to one present. At 10 a.m., she chaired a meeting in the Long Gallery. Party discipline was the topic of the day. Party Chair Berry pressed her to stamp her authority over wayward MPs, with news that Crispin Blunt and Andrew Bridgen were about to call for her to resign and an Opinion poll forecasting a 411-seat Labour landslide.¹⁹ CCHQ was equally infested by those who were no longer loyal to her, reported Berry: Johnson's right-hand aide Ross Kempell was one he wanted fired.

Indicative of crumbling regimes everywhere, they had their guns aimed at most people apart from themselves, including the Chief Whip and the director of communications at No. 10. The old canard reared its head: 'the message isn't being heard clearly enough'. Former Vote Leave director of communications Paul Stephenson was favoured as a replacement for the latter, but was thought to have no interest in leaving his public affairs business, Hanbury. Truss refused to accept that he wouldn't succumb to an invitation. 'Liz, he's not going to be interested,' said an aide in a jaded voice. 'Just ask him, will you,' she replied tersely. Macer Hall, long-standing political editor at the *Express*, was another name mentioned. But before any decisions could be taken, Truss had to break up the meeting because guests were assembling downstairs for the main event at 10.30 a.m., a discussion of financial measures urgently needing her ratification, chaired by her, with Hunt, Case, Treasury officials and political aides from No. 10 and No. 11 all in attendance. Before it formally opened, Hunt had a private word with her, anxious that she shouldn't be humiliated or

blindsided in the open meeting. According to an observer, Hunt adopted his most solicitous bedside manner to tell her, 'Prime Minister, I'm afraid I'm going to have to be reversing 90 per cent of what was laid out in the Mini-Budget.'

In the entire history of relations between the Prime Minister and their Chancellor, never before in an open meeting had the former so deferred to the latter on issues of such major economic importance.

Hunt went clinically and systematically through the plan that had been agreed on Saturday morning in the Treasury. He did leave in what one present described as a 'catnip', namely not revoking the cut in National Insurance. 'He felt the issue was totemic for her, it wasn't that significant financially, and he wanted to spare her some dignity,' said one present. 'The atmosphere was just extraordinary: Liz was visibly shaken and quite passive. The dominant thought I had was "Jeremy is now the Prime Minister",' said another. 'Liz wasn't really there,' said yet another.

When it finished shortly after midday, officials and aides departed to get on with the statements and actions required for the following day while she was left to comprehend the gravity of what had just happened, trying to think through where she stood in this totally changed world. To help her, she embarked on a series of short talks with her closest advisers as they walked around the Chequers garden.

According to one adviser, her husband Hugh asked, 'Do you think you should resign?'

'Jeremy is the Prime Minister,' Stein added.

'Well, I've still got the outriders [police motorbikes],' she snapped back with either flippancy or bitterness – perhaps both. 'What else could I do?' she said, believing that she had been outplayed, a belief to which she still holds.

The principal private secretary to the PM has the task of ensuring the smooth operation of the office. Losing a Prime Minister at any point, above all in a crisis, is the last thing they want to happen. According to a witness, they talked briefly:

'What will you do now, Prime Minister?' Catsaras asked her.

‘I’ll carry on.’

‘Very good, Prime Minister.’

‘I’ve been thinking about it. Jeremy will do the domestic side and I’ll do the foreign.’

‘Are you sure about that?’

‘Yes, I am. I want to tie things up with the EU.’

‘All right, Prime Minister, we can make that work.’

Fullbrook, Porter and Stein huddled together after Truss went indoors and agreed there was still a real possibility that she might chuck it in when the reality fully dawned that, very evidently, she was no longer in charge. Porter, who thought that the PM was edging her way towards the departure lounge, left and Case and Fullbrook were now alone together. They walked to their cars and agreed that they needed to stay in close contact to minimize the fallout if Truss decided to call it a day. Case challenged Fullbrook on his own priorities as her senior adviser. ‘As her chief of staff I will look after her to the end. But my priority is equally now minimizing the damage to the country of whatever comes next,’ Fullbrook replied. They looked at each other, the significance of what was said sinking in. They shook hands and drove their separate ways out through the Chequers front gates.

Lunch for the two families alone in the formal dining room was not the most spontaneous of occasions. For Hunt, his decision to accept her invitation to become Chancellor forty-eight hours before had been fully vindicated. She had been true to her word in giving him carte blanche in charting the new course. He found unravelling someone else’s errors was not difficult; indeed, it was rather exhilarating. For Truss, in contrast, her whole life’s ambition and reputation were being smashed to pieces.

The conversation was stilted until both sets of children started to talk about their favourite series on Netflix, which produced a heated argument and a welcome distraction. The Hunts left for home soon after and an exhausted Truss spent the afternoon and evening on and off her phone, flicking through the news and messaging the party’s big-hitters for advice while she weighed her future. Theresa May counselled being honest about

the mistakes, and being more businesslike in her manner and appearance. ‘Apologize and bring in fresh blood,’ advised George Osborne.²⁰ ‘Fight on,’ messaged a beach-bound Boris, ‘the people who plotted against one PM are now trying to bring down another.’ Less supportively, Biden’s ‘I wasn’t the only one that thought [the Mini-Budget] was a mistake’ comment at the ice cream parlour made the news at this time, and further riled her.

Early on Monday 17 October, as agreed on Saturday, Hunt’s five-minute video was released. Because of ‘the volatility in the markets’, Hunt said that he had agreed with the Speaker to release this short statement now, followed by a detailed statement to Parliament that afternoon with an opportunity for MPs to ask questions. Then he delivered the bombshell: ‘We will reverse almost all the tax measures announced in the growth plan three weeks ago.’²¹

That afternoon in the Chamber, with a listless Truss by his side, he provided the details, saying that the need for stability and reducing damaging speculation dictated the changes to the Mini-Budget being announced now, rather than waiting until the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan in two weeks’ time. As had been announced on Friday, the government would not be proceeding with the cut in corporation tax. He had now decided that the cut to dividend tax rates, the cut in the basic rate of income tax, the VAT-free shopping scheme, the freeze to alcohol duty rates and more would all be ended. Together with the rollback of the 45p tax rate, he said these measures were the equivalent of reversing £32 billion of the original £45 billion in unfunded tax cuts.²² As expected, the markets reacted positively: the pound rose against the dollar, and the yield on UK bonds fell, making government borrowing less expensive.²³ ‘As Jeremy was talking, we were being sent screenshots of Bloomberg screens showing the pound rallying and the market stabilizing apace,’ said economics adviser Adam Smith.²⁴ ‘Reaction from markets good, from colleagues good, the most that can be expected,’ Hunt messaged his team at 8 p.m. that night.

In his speech, Hunt announced the creation of the new ‘Economic Advisory Council’ to assist the government as it sought to repair the damage caused by the Mini-Budget, chaired by Rupert Harrison and Karen

Ward, who had advised Hammond when Chancellor. For personal reasons Harrison had turned down the offer to be ‘minister for financial stability’ with a seat in Cabinet, but was delighted to serve in this capacity. A Council of this nature had been discussed at Chevening, but had been aborted. The idea then was that it should be peopled by economists of sound mind who would prevent Truss and her ministers being swallowed up by the groupthink of the economic ‘blob’ they would encounter in power. Now, though the commitment to ‘independent economic advice’ was the same, a very different kind of economist and financier sat on it. Truss did manage to veto one of the suggested members: economist Kate Barker, who had served on the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee under Labour, and was thought by No. 10 to be ‘politically unsound’.

The Verdict: Avoid U-turns?

An interpretation was rapidly gaining widespread credence on the right, tacitly encouraged by Truss herself: Hunt, a non-economist, had been manipulated and bounced by Treasury officials determined to reinstate orthodoxy as they had always wanted. They and the Bank had panicked Hunt into the U-turn, they believed. Particular ire was reserved for the Governor’s ‘cliff-edge’ statement of the end of the Bank of England intervention, as planned, on Friday 14 October which had been unnecessary, while predictions of a ‘run on the pound’ the following Monday were ungrounded. Here was visible evidence of the ‘deep state’ in action, as Truss had long warned.

The Bank in contrast believes that ‘the markets might indeed have melted down on Monday had the swift action not been taken’, with sterling sold along with government debt, with disastrous consequences. It asserts that Bailey had only two choices, neither desirable: either announcing it was not the job of the Bank to buy up gilts and save the government’s humiliation, which would have created a bloodbath in the markets, or announcing an extension of its intervention by going back into the markets on Monday to buy gilts in large quantities. This latter course of action

would have spooked the markets even more, and fatally lost credibility for the Bank as an inflation-fighting and independent institution.

It is also possible that such an intervention would have failed entirely. One of the Bank's leaders dismissed the idea that further Bank action would have proved effective: 'My strong view is that it would have lasted a day or two before the markets forced Truss into a U-turn on fiscal policy. It was fiscal policy and the attack on the institutions that drove the crisis and until that changed there could be no solution.'

The ninth rule of premiership says that the Prime Minister must not U-turn on a major policy. Whether or not she was right to do so, and this book believes that she had no option but to do it, is beside the point. She implemented the biggest U-turn in modern prime ministerial history and it didn't work for her.

She had just four more days left as Prime Minister before she announced her resignation.

The financial markets might have been steadied, but the political marketplace was still in frenzy. Hunt brought her economic stability, but against her expectations it came at the price of political instability. 'It might've been done to appease the centre, though they'd already made up their mind on her, but what it did was explode Project Truss and lost her the right of the party,' said Gavin Williamson.²⁵ Confidence in her was further undermined when Leader of the House Penny Mordaunt, rather than Truss, answered questions in the House of Commons on the replacement of the Chancellor, not least when she had to deny that the PM had been hiding 'under a desk'.²⁶ 'It was evident to all: Jeremy was the Prime Minister in all but name,' said Kwarteng, a view echoed by many.²⁷ Thatcher had not U-turned when under massive pressure in 1981. The Tory right asked: why had Truss allowed herself to do so now?

The *volte-face* in her policies did not win the City round to Truss either. By Monday, several senior figures, including Tory peer Stuart Rose, private equity boss Guy Hands and former chair of Land Securities Alison Carnwath all called on her to resign.²⁸

Had Truss studied her history more closely, she would have appreciated that Thatcher was able to resist a U-turn in 1980 because she had spent eighteen months preparing her ground. Truss had no choice but to U-turn almost forty-two years to the day later because she had spent eighteen days completely failing to do so herself.

The premiership was still not dead, though. As long as her MPs were prepared to back the new dispensation, she could survive till Christmas; and, who knows, even beyond.



Rule Number Ten: Truss failed to retain the confidence of the party. Here at PMQs on Wednesday 19 October

10

RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTY

17–20 October 2022

If you rise to become Prime Minister, you no longer have to worry about people above you sacking you because, once the monarch lost that power in the nineteenth century, there is no one above you. Instead, you have to worry about people *below* you, because they hold your future in their hands.

‘Don’t divide the party’

What is surprising is how often in history Prime Ministers have forgotten this truth that constitutes the tenth and final rule of premiership. If a Prime Minister retains the confidence of colleagues in the parliamentary party, they may remain at No. 10 for years. But once that confidence is lost, they will be gone within weeks or even days.

The first Prime Minister to lose their party’s confidence in the post-1832 Reform Act era was Robert Peel. During the 1840s, he decided on the repeal of the Corn Laws, protective agricultural tariffs that boosted the profits of landholders, many of whom were represented on the Conservative benches. It would be Benjamin Disraeli who rallied the backbench rebellion, arguing that free trade would ruin the finely balanced ‘territorial constitution’ of England. Peel won the fight, with the help of Radical and Whig MPs, but left his party irrevocably divided and was forced to resign in 1846, consigning the Conservatives to almost thirty years of opposition, and a few short-lived minority governments, before they were returned to Downing Street with a decisive majority, led by Disraeli. The lesson that Peel taught to subsequent Conservative leaders and that has reverberated

down into the twenty-first century could not have been clearer: keep the party together, whatever the cost.

The outstanding example in modern times is Margaret Thatcher, who ultimately fell because she lost her parliamentary party. Her steadfast refusal to change course on the poll tax, her combative attitude towards the burgeoning European Union and her stridency despite plummeting opinion polls alienated her parliamentary colleagues. In November 1990, the challenge from Michael Heseltine led to a ballot of MPs, and dramatic scenes in Parliament. Diarist and Tory MP Alan Clark wrote, ‘The whole house is in ferment. Little groups, conclaves everywhere... in the corridors it is all furtive whispering and glancing over shoulders.’¹ Though she won the first ballot, it was not by enough and a second was required. Her Cabinet then almost unanimously gave her the same message: ‘I will support you if you stand, but you cannot win.’² She announced her withdrawal from the leadership ballots the following day and thereby paved the way for John Major’s victory. When she left No. 10 on 28 November 1990, as Prime Ministers have all done, in public or in private, she left in tears.

This century, May and Johnson fell after they lost the support of their MPs. The former had a deep love of her party, the latter anything but. Openly scornful of it, Johnson preferred to see himself as a presidential figure with a personal mandate gained in the 2019 election. He shunned multiple attempts to ingratiate himself to his tiresome MPs, believing at heart, like Truss, that his support derived from the party in the country, which continued to love him, rather than the parliamentary party, which no longer did. But it was the parliamentary party that he had to work with, and it was they – fed up with months of scandal and humiliation – that finally brought him down in July 2022.

The one factor that can keep an ailing Prime Minister alive after they have lost the support of their MPs is the absence of a successor, a ‘Prince over the Water’ who would clearly be a more convincing leader to the electorate. In September 2022, there was one. By mid-October, a second was beginning to stir. Rishi Sunak had never gone away, and now Boris

Johnson was pondering coming back. Backers of both men began, in these fraught days, stealthily to move onto the front foot. One of Truss's sovereign errors, not accepting that the parliamentary party had always preferred Sunak and doing nothing to heal the divide, now came back to haunt her with a vengeance. True, many Conservative MPs, for a mixture of economic, political and personal reasons, continued to loathe Sunak, but he had strong and influential backers. Her Cabinet, which had only ever had a handful of loyalists and had now lost the most prominent, Kwarteng, were beginning to stick their noses into the headwinds and decide which way they would jump.

Monday 17 October: Delusion

On the surface, Monday 17 October was not a bad day for the Prime Minister. She survived the low points of Hunt delivering his Commons statement that tore up her growth plan, and Mordaunt standing in for her at the despatch box. Against the background of Twitter speculation that she was resigning imminently, she was herself having a short meeting with Graham Brady, Chair of the 1922 Committee. Truss surprised him by telling him, 'Kwasi has let me down and I have been dealing with his mistakes,' adding, 'I have no intention of resigning,' recalled an observer. She left, as was her tendency, with a more positive interpretation of a difficult meeting than her interlocutor. 'It was a very good conversation. There's no immediate concern from members,' she told her team. Indeed, she was 'jubilant', telling them, 'The news about Jeremy has gone down very well. The party has been brought back together.'

No. 10, as part of the refresh discussed the day before at Chequers, had been reorganized that Monday with a fresh sense of purpose. Long-term party adviser David Canzini, to general surprise but widespread applause, had pitched up early in the morning to inject vigour into the operation. Canzini was widely respected as a strategist. He was exactly the kind of no-nonsense organizational and party wizard who Truss had needed all along: she had wanted to appoint him at the start, but Wallace had objected. 'F**k

Ben Wallace,’ one of her Cabinet heavyweights told her. ‘You’re still the f**king Prime Minister.’ So in he came. A ‘War Room’ was set up in the Pillared Room upstairs in No. 10 with a square of desks in the middle, a nascent communications and policy grid, and a procession of MPs and aides striding purposefully in and out. To old Johnson hands, it was reminiscent of ‘operation save big dog’, the rearguard action fought in his final months and weeks to keep him in power.

Truss knew that her greatest hope of survival rested on the lack of any viable successor. That Monday, she thought she was safe enough. Those who had always wanted Sunak to succeed her were no closer to a breakthrough, with Hunt seeming to spike their guns, while Johnson was still egging her on with encouragement, the dream of a return still, he thought, far away.

Meetings with her Conservative MPs also buoyed her spirits. Sophie Jarvis was back in favour with Truss and being asked to do what she did best: sweet talk MPs. All day on Sunday at Chequers, having come back through the night from Adam Jones’s wedding, she had been on her phone talking to members of the European Research Group and the One Nation Conservatives group, persuading them that they should get behind the PM, and that the party had no alternative candidate or choice. Truss’s meeting with ERG members on Monday went particularly well: ‘They were electrified to see Canzini with her,’ said one present. ‘There was a sense in the building on Monday that it might work,’ said Simon McGee, her comms director.³ For a few hours Truss was full of hope about her plans for a slimmed-down growth plan, and thoughts of leadership on the international stage. A question from one of her aides brought her crashing down to earth: ‘Are you not disappointed about the reversals under Jeremy?’ ‘It is what it is,’ she replied, her mood suddenly becoming icy.

Tuesday 18 October: Denial

The nosedive in Truss’s premiership was precipitous. Tuesday’s newspapers were dire. Talk of fresh rail strikes were secondary to withering attacks on

her leadership. ‘Truss: “I’m sorry... We went too far and too fast”’, ‘Hunt rips up PM’s plans in an astonishing U-turn on tax’ and ‘Hunt takes charge as PM fears the exit’ were the headlines in the *Daily Express*, the *Guardian* and the *i* newspaper respectively.⁴ ‘By lurching from crisis to self-inflicted crisis, the Conservatives risk irrevocable damage to the party,’ said normally loyal *Daily Mail*. ‘It’s time for the wise men and women of the Conservative Party to decide whether the loss of confidence in Miss [sic] Truss is terminal. If it is, they must come to a solution – and fast.’⁵

Support was still coming from Johnson and allies, deeply worried about Sunak taking over. That day, he sent her a message with ideas for the case she should be making. He told her to ‘Get out on the front foot’ and contrasted recent strikes to ‘the heroes... who keep our country moving’ and who built for the future. He finished his message urging her to say she is ‘delivering future growth and gains in productivity. I say to politicians across the country. It’s time to get off Twitter and on with the job.’

Truss still banked on being safe from a challenge from her own MPs. The final weeks of May’s and Johnson’s premierships had been plagued by daily news, often speculative, of letters coming into Graham Brady in his capacity as Chair of the 1922 Committee, requesting a vote of confidence be held in the Prime Minister. Conservative MPs, for decades deep into the twentieth century the epitome of loyalty to their leader, could now not resist grandstanding on submitting letters, calling cards for a hoped-for successor. The threshold for triggering such a vote is normally 15 per cent of Conservative MPs, i.e. fifty-four letters. But as Johnson had suffered such a vote in June 2022, she thought she would be safe because the rules prevented another confidence vote for eleven months unless half the parliamentary party, a staggering 179 MPs, declared that they wanted one.⁶ Independent sources confirm that the letters started trickling in soon after the Mini-Budget, and from Friday 14 October, the tempo increased dramatically. By early the following week, Brady gave up even trying to count the letters because it was obvious that there were more than enough.⁷

Cabinet that Tuesday morning only just managed to paper over the gathered ministers’ barely concealed sceptical disdain and disappointment

towards their leader of ministers sitting around the table. Where the axe would fall in the Autumn Statement later that month was the principal question under review. Even after Hunt's announcement the day before, many billions of pounds of savings still needed to be found. The Chancellor outlined some thoughts. A moratorium on new prison building had been high on the list: Truss wanted to cap it but Justice Secretary Brandon Lewis told her that it would require changes to sentencing because there was insufficient space to house all those being sentenced. 'Does that mean MPs will have to vote for softer sentences?' an adviser enquired. 'Yes, I fear it will.' 'Well, we can't do that then!' Truss responded brusquely, quickly changing course.

The policy choices were bleak indeed. Over a decade after being elected on a platform of austerity, the government now discussed... even more and deeper austerity. There were no easy decisions and public services would get worse, not good news with the general election no more than two years away. There was no exciting growth agenda to stir Tory blood any more, no more hopes, no more dreams. Just grim reality.

Lewis was one of the very few loyalists left in Cabinet alongside Cleverly and Coffey, who, for all her intense frustrations with her capricious leadership, stayed loyal to the end. Ideologists like Clarke and Rees-Mogg who had liked her championing the free market had become disenchanted. The latter, whose anger that he had not been made Chancellor was reinvigorated when Kwarteng U-turned, was pushing for progress on fracking legislation, which was shortly to unravel badly. Berry and Zahawi backed her still largely out of loyalty to Fullbrook. A dwindling band of party loyalists who accepted that she had won the leadership election and their duty was to support her included figures such as Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Tom Tugendhat. But early that week, the balance in Cabinet tipped towards those such as Braverman who had never liked or rated her, and only backed her leadership bid because they judged she would beat Sunak.

Wallace, the man who would most likely have won the leadership had he come forward, was chief among those who had never been enamoured

with Truss. Dislike of Labour alone was keeping him in the tent. But Hunt's talk of spending cuts and the prospect of her imminent collapse forced him out into the open, along with his Minister of State James Heappey, saying they would resign if the pledge to raise defence spending to 3 per cent of GDP by the end of the decade was scrapped.⁸ Wallace carried huge influence and his stand was widely noted by MPs.

Above all, a Prime Minister in difficulty needs to demonstrate calm proficiency and to offer a steady direction around which the party can unite. The more acute the difficulty, the more stable they need to be. But in three separate episodes involving her Home Secretary, a former Chancellor and her Chief Whip, Truss was to display the exact opposite.

Before Tuesday ended, Truss was to trigger the loss of Braverman. Heavy duty resignations, as Johnson discovered, can be far more damaging across the parliamentary party than a PM in their No. 10 eyrie can imagine.

Braverman had been a reluctant convert to Truss, the only senior figure explicitly offered a Cabinet job as a condition for her support during the leadership election among MPs. Immigration had been a divisive issue between them from the very first Cabinet, and Truss's attempt to slap her down on the topic at the party conference still rankled with her. On Tuesday afternoon, Truss asked her to announce that immigrants were welcome in key employment sectors including science and IT, in part to placate the OBR, which thought the Home Office's rejection of additional visas, and Braverman's aim of reducing immigration by hundreds of thousands, would dampen growth by reducing firms' ability to hire. No. 10 got wind the following day that Braverman had sent a draft written ministerial statement on immigration from her personal email to one of her most loyal MPs, John Hayes. She also sent it to Tory MP Andrew Percy by mistake, who reported it to the Chief Whip. Though it was initially briefed out that the information was secret and market sensitive, Braverman would later defend herself by saying that the documents were not marked in that manner.⁹

Officials in Downing Street were alarmed and told Truss, 'This action has broken the ministerial code. She has forwarded government material from her personal email to an MP... You could try to mount a defence but it

would be hard to see how it would work, not least because she is the minister responsible herself for Security.’ According to an aide who was in the room, Truss replied, ‘Very well. Please speak to Sue. She will need to resign.’ But Braverman refused to resign when Case met her in the House, and so she was summoned to the Cabinet Room.

‘I’m sorry, Prime Minister, but I don’t think I’ve done anything wrong,’ she said in her defence, as an aide recalled.

‘I’m sorry too, but what you have done is not OK, Suella,’ Truss replied.

‘This is not classified material. I am merely asking for a view from parliamentary stakeholders.’

‘It is market sensitive information, and regarded by No. 10 as affecting the OBR’s economic forecast at a sensitive time,’ Truss replied.

‘I do not agree and do not see why it is regarded as a sensitive issue,’ Braverman persisted, denying that the information was market sensitive.

‘I’m sorry, Suella. I don’t think that you can remain in office having done this. I think you will have to go.’

‘I think that’s totally unfair. I’ve been very clear with you. I agree with your growth plan, but doing it via immigration is not the right way. MPs won’t wear it. You’ll never get support for it,’ Braverman countered.

‘Yes we will. We will do it in conjunction with Rwanda,’ Truss said emphatically, referring to the plan to process and resettle asylum seekers who enter the UK illegally in Rwanda. ‘I’m very sorry about this. We will send you a draft of my letter so you can read it over before it is released.’

Braverman left shortly afterwards, clearly very displeased.

Aides drafted the letter, but while they did so, Braverman released her own, acidic letter: ‘The business of government relies upon people accepting responsibility for their mistakes. Pretending we haven’t made mistakes, carrying on as if everyone can’t see that we have made them, and hoping that things will magically come right is not serious politics. I have made a mistake; I accept responsibility: I resign.’ The furious letter concluded with a challenge to the whole direction of Truss’s government: ‘Not only have we broken key pledges that were promised to our voters, but I have had serious concerns about this Government’s commitment to

honouring manifesto commitments, such as reducing overall migration numbers and stopping illegal migration'.¹⁰ The aides promptly went back to work to amend the PM's glowing letter to something more robust.

Truss was content to lose Braverman, if not so acrimoniously. She had never wanted her as Home Secretary, and now more than ever she needed this plum job to offer elsewhere. Key to the survival strategy was to bring in senior figures from the Sunak camp, as Osborne had counselled when she'd called him a couple of days before. 'I went through prominent names on the Sunak wing, and told her it had to be dramatic, or it wouldn't be noticed,' he said.¹¹ Shapps was the name who had frequently been mentioned as the man to broaden her Cabinet.

Here was the holder of the parliamentary spreadsheet with its to-die-for information on the motivations of all Conservative MPs. She knew he was a serial agitator against her. But she knew too he was after a big job involving his great love, security and secrecy. Unsure if even this bait would entice him, she had a backup plan to shift Cleverly to the Home Office and to offer Shapps Foreign Secretary if he played hard to get. Concerns that he might be an enemy within were silenced by the argument that 'once Ken [Ken McCallum, director general of MI5] gives Grant his first security briefing, he will quickly fall in behind us', said an aide. Shapps duly accepted the job, becoming, with just six days in office, the shortest-serving Home Secretary in history. Records were tumbling so quickly barely anyone noticed. Had he not accepted the bait, he might have become the shortest-serving Foreign Secretary instead.

As far as Truss was concerned, on the face of it a dangerous flareup had been resolved rather nicely.

Rumbling on throughout Tuesday, and Wednesday morning too, was the second time bomb: Javid's displeasure at reading disparaging words about himself from No. 10 in *The Sunday Times*. The source, key comms adviser Jason Stein, knew at once he had gone too far in his desire to trash the story that Hunt wasn't the first choice as Chancellor, which might have undermined his credibility and that of his rescue package. As a result, Stein went too far in the opposite direction to trash Javid's character, whom many

had speculated was the alternative candidate.¹² Equally, the adviser knew that Truss had his back: 'I've been told about the Saj stuff. Hilarious,' she had texted him on Saturday evening. But Truss was also keen to douse down the story, so she called Javid at eight o'clock on Sunday morning. One witness recalled the conversation that followed.

'It's been brought to my attention about the article. I want to say it's nothing to do with me. I never said it,' she told him.

Javid was unimpressed. 'Thank you for saying that, but *The Sunday Times* would never have printed it if it hadn't come from someone in your circle very close to you,' he replied.

Javid had been told by an insider that Stein had planted the story. 'I want you to find the culprit at once.'

'I will, but I'm not certain who actually said it.'

'Well, I'm not certain you will last the week and certainly not if you don't fire him because I will make your life hell.' He hung up.

The next day, Javid passed a message to No. 10 to say that if Stein wasn't fired, he would ask a PMQ on Wednesday (he was on the Order Paper for that day as Question No. 1) along the lines of 'Does the Prime Minister value her advisers as colleagues more than her Conservative MPs as colleagues?' Not satisfied with the response he was getting, he said he wanted a formal disciplinary process to begin to investigate the matter. No. 10 now found itself fighting wars on several fronts at the same time, with the result that it suffered significant overload. It resembled the period between December 1973 and February 1974 when Heath's No. 10 was buckling under the pressure of keeping control in the middle of an economic and financial crisis, and during which the head of the civil service, William Armstrong, had to be relieved because of excessive strain. The procedure was not clear whether the Prime Minister was able to remove a special adviser. After conversations between Catsaras and Case, Stein was removed as acting communications director and given a written warning. Tensions that had been simmering only just below the surface since August between Fullbrook and Stein now broke out into the open,

with Fullbrook finding Stein's close relationship with the PM, and her reluctance to discipline him, making his own job considerably harder.

He and Porter realized how absurd and destabilizing the saga was becoming, so they both called Javid separately to try to persuade him not to proceed with his PMQ plan. 'Jason has admitted it, says he's sorry and he wants to call you to apologize. Please will you drop the PMQ?' Porter asked him. She even wrote a letter of apology on behalf of Stein. 'I totally agree with you,' Fullbrook told him. 'I can't explain why Jason has such a strong hold over Liz.' 'Look, you're the chief of staff,' Javid replied. 'You have the power to dismiss him.' 'I wish I had,' said Fullbrook.

The saga dragged on into Wednesday. 'Unless Simon Case personally confirms to me that Stein is fired, I'm going to ask my question,' Javid told No. 10. Eventually, Catsaras took Stein for a walk around St James's Park and told him he would have to be suspended pending the investigation of the allegations by the Propriety and Ethics team, as that was the only way Javid would withdraw the question. The PM hated doing it, Catsaras explained. 'It's OK, it's all done, mate. Best of luck with it. I'll see you later,' Stein told an aide as he left the building later, never to return.

At 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Javid received a call from Case. Case confirmed that Stein had been suspended. Only later did No. 10 discover that Javid had woken up with Covid that morning, and didn't plan to come into the Commons in any case to ask the question. Valuable hours and goodwill of Truss's top team had been expended on this second psychodrama. But it was to be eclipsed totally by the mortal harm that would be done by the third.

Wednesday 19 October: Division

MPs will put up with many things. But confused leadership from their PM makes them despair. It's hard to think of a day in the last 300 years of prime ministerial history more incompetently handled than Wednesday 19 October 2022. The last day before Liz Truss announced her resignation.

At the start of Wednesday, few were predicting her imminent demise. Some of the powerful forces we have described that keep a Prime Minister in post still pertained. Stephen Bush, associate editor of the *Financial Times*, while putting her chances of being removed before the next election ‘at 95%’, wrote, ‘I am dubious that she will be removed anytime soon.’ The reasons were, short of her falling on her sword, that the mechanism for removing her was fraught, with many on the right including the ERG sticking with her, while the centre/left were reluctant to oust her for fear of being labelled regicides and leaving the party even weaker.¹³

Truss, as was her wont, chose not to look at the headlines in the morning papers. But she was informed of the widespread anger they were reporting about removing the ‘triple lock’ on pensions introduced by the Coalition government in 2010. Under this policy the state pension must rise by whichever is higher: average earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent; it is particularly popular among the elderly, the most dependable pro-Tory voting group in the UK, and hence liked by her MPs.¹⁴ Cuts had to be found urgently, but she reluctantly accepted they couldn’t be here. So she summoned Hunt to No. 10 in the morning to tell him that the ‘triple lock’ would have to stay after all.

That morning Truss, when not dealing with the fallout from the Home Secretary and Javid dramas, spent time preparing for PMQs. Her team felt she had survived largely unscathed from both. But Starmer knew he had her on the run when questions were called at noon, opening with: ‘A book is being written about the Prime Minister’s time in office. Apparently, it is going to be out by Christmas. Is that the release date or the title?’

‘I have delivered the energy price guarantee... I have reversed the national insurance increase... and we will be taking steps to crack down on the militant unions,’ she responded defiantly.

Starmer continued relentlessly. ‘The country has nothing to show for it except for the destruction of the economy and the implosion of the Tory party. I have the list here [he runs over the U-turns]. Her supposed best friend, the former Chancellor, has gone as well. They are all gone. So why is she still here?’

Her response, uttered twice, came back to haunt her: ‘I am a fighter and not a quitter.’¹⁵ She didn’t need to turn round to realize the widespread dismay among her MPs.

Even after Starmer’s humiliation of the Prime Minister, the end still did not seem imminent. That day the words of David Frost, the Brexit supremo she had wanted as her chief of staff just three months before, were cutting: ‘Truss just can’t stay in office for one very obvious reason: she campaigned against the policies she’s now implementing,’ he wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*.¹⁶ Hunt’s appearance before the 1922 Committee brought some respite, showing that the party was not yet ready to ditch its boss. The mood was ‘grim but realistic and respectful’, said a Treasury aide, as the Chancellor talked over the impending Autumn Statement and the tough decisions that would be needed. Friendly MPs primed to speak to journalists as soon as the doors opened were stood down. Clear to all, Hunt had carried the room.

But then came the third swing of the axe that was finally to topple her. Business and Energy Secretary Rees-Mogg’s impatience to press ahead with fracking, the politically and environmentally controversial injecting of fluid into cracks in rock fissures to access oil and gas reserves beloved by free marketeers, now exploded onto the parliamentary scene. The 2019 Conservative manifesto had effectively promised to maintain the moratorium on the practice, and had ruled out changes to the planning system to enable it. There would be no fracking ‘unless the science shows categorically that it can be done safely’.¹⁷ Many MPs had therefore felt safe to promise their constituencies that there would be no fracking on their watch, quelling strong local opposition.

But Truss supported fracking. She regarded restrictions as an unwarranted bar on free enterprise. She craved cheaper oil and gas prices for the hard-pressed struggling to pay bills, and which would no doubt help businesses thrive. Typically, she had little sympathy for her MPs who didn’t agree with her. ‘She never had much affinity for the Conservative Party or its MPs: she was always much more concerned to do what she herself thought was right for people in the country,’ said Jarvis.¹⁸ At issue also was

Truss's presumption that she could ignore the 2019 manifesto, on which Johnson had won the majority, at will. Labour jumped on the opportunity for widening cracks in fissures in the Conservative parliamentary party and on Tuesday evening called for a motion to allocate Commons time for a debate on banning fracking.

Wendy Morton and Craig Whittaker, the Chief and Deputy Chief Whip, promptly started receiving messages from MPs concerned about how to vote on the motion. Late on Tuesday evening, Morton was becoming worried whether the government would have sufficient votes to win the next day. So she called Truss, could not get her and left a message. Relations between Morton and Truss's team had broken down weeks before: they had no confidence in her grip and regretted that they hadn't persuaded Coffey to take the job originally. 'I don't want her attending meetings,' Truss had said. 'You do realize that No. 10 are calling you Wendy Moron,' a colleague confided in Morton.

By common consent, Morton was a capable Chief Whip who had been performing her job in the genial way that anyone who knew her would have expected her to do. If Truss had wanted a bulldog, she should have appointed one. Losing confidence in such a pivotal figure in a government so quickly suggested either the PM didn't know who she was appointing, or was unsure what the job entailed. Or both.

Anxiety about the vote did not assuage overnight, so at the 9 a.m. meeting on Wednesday in the Pillared Room, Berry said, 'This is essentially a vote of confidence in the government, and we have to win it.' Morton took away that it was indeed to be a formal vote of confidence in the government, a very big deal, which weaved its way into the discussions that the whips were holding with MPs. During the PMQs on Wednesday, a planted question to provide reassurance elicited the response from Truss that there would be no fracking except if the local community agreed with it.¹⁹ But as the evening vote approached, there was still uncertainty about the status of the vote and whether there would be enough support to get it over the line. 'I didn't know that tonight's vote was a vote of confidence,' Truss told an aide, and asked them to find out what was going on.

While Truss went off for her weekly audience with the King at Buckingham Palace, Canzini decided to bring her senior team together at 6.30 p.m. in a small room off the Cabinet Room. Still only in his third day in post, Canzini, a veteran observer of Downing Street, had been staggered by the lack of political grip in the building and the speed at which everyone was trying to move. He believed that Truss herself hadn't realized the implication of a confidence vote, a measure he considered 'a huge error for any leader in trouble because it legitimizes MPs who dislike them to cause damage'.²⁰ Morton joined their meeting on speakerphone from the House of Commons. 'Wendy, are you sure of the numbers?' Canzini asked her directly.

'We don't know yet. So we don't think it should be treated as a confidence vote.'

'Wendy, it *is* a confidence vote. You do realize the consequence of us losing? The government will fall.'

'It shouldn't be a confidence vote.'

'Wendy, it is.'

'Will we definitely win?' another asked her. Another pause. She and Whittaker debated the question before responding. They agreed it would probably be fine, and they had had no indication of a big rebellion, but doubt remained.

'I don't know,' Morton replied again.

Pandemonium broke out among the dozen crowded in the room until Canzini gripped the position, announcing, 'This is what we will do.' Two messages were to be sent out, he said: one to Rees-Mogg's deputy, Energy Minister Graham Stuart, to announce from the despatch box (the only place from which to annul a confidence vote) that the fracking vote was *not* a vote of confidence, and from Charlotte Owen (a hangover aide from Johnson's No. 10) to Rees-Mogg's principal parliamentary aide to tell him what was happening. For a few moments, it seemed like the problem had gone away. If the fracking vote was indeed lost, it would be an embarrassment not a disaster.

Stuart duly made his announcement when summing up the debate on behalf of the government. But it came as a surprise and shock to Tory MPs in the Chamber. Conservative MP Ruth Edwards quickly raised a point of order: 'I really need to press the Minister on this question of a confidence vote. Many of us have been told today by our Whips that if we vote for, or abstain from voting against, this motion, we will lose the Whip. Will he please confirm whether that is the case?' Stuart's response did nothing to calm frayed nerves: 'That is a matter for party managers, and I am not a party manager.'²¹ Morton and Whittaker listened to Stuart's statement in horror and decided they were not prepared to be undermined by No. 10, as they believed they had been.

After Truss's meeting with the King, she had returned to Westminster to be greeted by a friendly MP who quickly told her not to go into Parliament, warning, 'It's chaos.' But she went to her parliamentary office anyway, to be confronted there by an angry Craig Whittaker who charged in to see her shouting, 'It's a total disgrace!'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' Truss retorted, in the dark about what had been happening.

'You've cut the ground from under the whips' feet,' he exclaimed.

'I have no idea why you are so worked up,' she said. It was only after he stormed off that she learned that her Downing Street team had called off the confidence vote in her absence.

Truss sent a message for her senior team to join her urgently in the Commons office. 'Why the f**k has this been happening? What the f**k is going on?' she demanded to know. 'No one was going to tell her that it was the result of her indecision,' said one present. Mid-lecture, at 6.59 p.m., she received a text from Morton: 'I've resigned'; then a second: 'With immediate effect.'²² Prime Ministers should never panic, but at that point, Truss panicked. Reality had dawned that a PM cannot lose a Home Secretary and a Chief Whip on the same day, six days after losing a Chancellor. If this was a game of chess, she had lost a rook and a knight, and couldn't afford to lose a bishop, whatever she thought of them. 'I'm going to go off and persuade her to change her mind,' the PM announced,

charging out of the door. Once she tracked Morton down, she persuaded her to join her in her inner office.

Stuck on the Chamber floor, Leader of the House Mordaunt was trying to maintain order and to make sense of it all. The Leader's prime task is to ensure government business in the House is being properly conducted; that very transparently was not the case that night. Taking the matter into her own hands, she enquired where the Chief Whip was. 'She has resigned,' the reply came back. So she slipped out of the Chamber and ran down the corridor to the Prime Minister's office to ask where the PM was. A movement of a hand gestured to the answer, so she burst into the inner office where she found Truss and Morton together 'having a heart to heart and drinking a glass of wine', as she later recalled.²³ Incredulous at 'the lack of nous', she shouted at them, 'You need to know what's happening in the Chamber. MPs are in total confusion about what you are requiring of them. You've got literally two minutes before the vote is called. Stop explaining yourselves to me, get in there and take responsibility.' On reflection, she explained, 'I didn't enjoy shouting but I thought it was necessary. They had left an experienced team without any clear instructions at a moment of great vulnerability, with no Chief Whip on duty. It seemed totally divorced from reality and a dereliction of one of the basic asks your troop make of their leader – to know what is being asked of them,' she added.²⁴ Morton and Truss then left to attend the vote. An aide recalled that 'she and Wendy spoke more than once. It was a mess.'

Confused MPs were not certain whether Morton had resigned or not, and, in a sign that the end was near, were being openly contemptuous of the government. Adding to the anger was the feeling among some Conservative MPs that they had been manhandled and shouted at by Truss loyalists and whips to vote the right way. An unruly crowd of MPs built up outside the 'No' lobby as Conservatives wavered, unsure of whether it was a vote of confidence or not. Government ministers tried to persuade MPs to oppose the motion, while Labour MPs encouraged them to support it. Voices were raised. On two occasions, the tellers stopped counting due to the noise level.

A subsequent investigation by the Speaker found no evidence of bullying, though it did find discussion had been at times ‘fraught’ and ‘intemperate’.²⁵

The government ultimately managed to win the vote quite comfortably (326–230) defeating the Labour motion to force a vote on a bill to ban fracking.²⁶ But the victory had been a Pyrrhic one. The scene had been chaotic, the MPs were furious. Those who had been prepared to give Truss the benefit of the doubt concluded that her shambolic premiership could not be allowed to go on any longer.

While these scenes were taking place, another conversation between Truss and Morton was occurring in her inner Commons sanctum, as recalled by a witness. ‘I’m no longer surprised to be undermined by you in this way,’ Morton told her, ‘which is why Craig and I are resigning.’

‘I don’t accept either of your resignations,’ Truss replied.

‘I’m sorry about all of this, Prime Minister,’ Morton said, seeing how distressed Truss was.

‘Well, will you continue then?’

‘I will need to talk it through with the whips,’ replied a very troubled Morton. So Truss and Morton walked together to the whips’ office where one whip declared insouciantly, ‘If they go, we’re all going.’ Such a collective walkout by the whips would have made the government untenable. Truss thought quickly. ‘But I have persuaded them to stay,’ she replied. An uneasy truce was reached whereby both Morton and Whittaker agreed to resume their posts and for a statement to that effect to be put out.

No. 10, though, was operating on the information that they had received that both had gone, and, as it is institutionally grooved to do, was swinging into action to put replacements speedily in place. As with Braverman, Truss’s aides seized on the loss of someone they didn’t rate as an opportunity to put somebody more useful to them in Morton’s place. Whittaker would have been first choice: the previous Thursday, he’d been sent a message saying, ‘Candidly, Craig, the Prime Minister thinks you are the person who is running the whipping.’ But the team, assuming Whittaker had resigned too, alighted on the equable Greg Hands as their favoured replacement: they would have replaced Morton with him three or four

weeks earlier had Whittaker not told No. 10, ‘Sorry, if she goes, I go as well.’²⁷ The threat of the double resignation held Morton in place. So Hands it was. Catsaras put a call into Buckingham Palace to seek formal approval from the King for the appointment of Hands as Morton’s successor as Chief Whip, a reminder that, even at times of unparalleled pressure, it is *His Majesty’s* Government, not the Prime Minister’s. An hour later, a call came back that the King was indeed content with the new appointment, proof that despite the chaos, some parts of the British state still operated smoothly. Then came the news that Morton had withdrawn her resignation. So the embarrassed official made a second call to the Palace to say that the appointment would not be happening after all. It is difficult to believe that the monarch was impressed by the competence of his reign’s first administration.

Truss’s senior staff had been told not to leave the building because she wanted an emergency strategy meeting that evening to review the position. But at 11 p.m., with confusion still reigning, the message went around, ‘There might not be any meeting as we still don’t know when it will all wrap up.’ Her staff had had enough: voting with their feet, everyone just went home. Director of Strategy Iain Carter walked out of the building with Simon Case. ‘What do you think will happen?’ he asked the Cabinet secretary. ‘This is still not the end. I don’t think it will collapse immediately,’ Case replied.²⁸

Meanwhile, a formal dinner was being held at the historic Carlton Club in St James’s Street, the original home of the Conservative Party before Central Office/CCHQ was established. The occasion was the hundredth anniversary of the meeting of Conservative MPs at the club that brought down Lloyd George’s coalition, an ever-potent reminder of the power of MPs to dethrone Prime Ministers. Brady, one of the guest speakers, later recalled, ‘It was very odd to be leaving the House of Commons in so much ferment. But once inside the club, the atmosphere was strangely calm, despite everyone knowing that a seismic event was taking place in the party simultaneously.’²⁹ According to Jake Berry, Brady asked him for a private word in a side room. ‘This can’t go on. Liz has to go,’ the 1922 Committee

Chair told him. Brady, for all his seniority in post (in 2022, he became the longest-serving Chair in history), was regarded by some in the party as partly responsible for the defenestration of both May and Johnson; the worry was that he might be trigger happy again. ‘Be careful what you wish for, Graham,’ the Party Chair cautioned, adding, ‘The person who has the authority and the mandate from the electorate is Boris. We should go back to Boris.’ ‘That is totally unacceptable. It cannot happen,’ Brady replied. Brady insisted there should be a raised bar for the number of MPs to get candidates on the ballot to avoid another lengthy multiple-round process, which Berry strongly resisted. ‘Graham was desperate to do anything to keep Boris off and for Sunak to win,’ he later said.³⁰ Brady strongly rejects any suggestion that the contest was planned in a way that would favour any one candidate, saying that ‘the process was neutral’. The 100-backer threshold was to ensure speed and Johnson had as much opportunity to win as anybody else.

One hundred years on from 1922, was history repeating itself?

Thursday 20 October: Defeat

After she returned to No. 10 tired and defeated late on Wednesday evening, she cancelled a meeting with Hunt and went up to the flat instead.³¹ Porter thinks that she had been toying with the idea of whether to go since Sunday: the question was now at the top of her mind. She then discussed what to do with Hugh, her closest counsellor. Like Denis Thatcher thirty-two years before, he gave the same advice to his beleaguered wife. ‘The fracking vote made me realize the MPs were not with me,’ she later said. ‘I didn’t enter No. 10 to be Prime Minister: I entered No. 10 to change things.’³²

When she came downstairs on Thursday, though, there was still an element of doubt in her mind.

She met Catsaras in the Cabinet Room before 8 a.m. Drawing on his close relationship dating back to her appointment as Foreign Secretary just thirteen months before, he felt he could give her the unvarnished truth. ‘Last night was a total shambles. You have lost any remaining authority.’

‘How do you know?’

‘Even David Frost is calling for your resignation.’

She had not seen Frost’s article the day before. ‘Is he?’

‘Yes, he is, I’m afraid.’

‘Do you think it’s over?’

‘Yes, I do.’ Bar husband Hugh, there was no one whose opinion she relied on more.

A pause. She sighed.

‘Get me Mark Fullbrook then,’ she said. Catsaras sent a message for the chief of staff to join them. Fullbrook had missed the chaos of the previous day because he was attending his father’s funeral.

‘Is it all over, Mark?’ she asked when he joined them.

‘It’s a question not of whether, but when,’ he replied. She looked at him, the man who had overseen her election as party leader and her premiership. She didn’t say anything.

‘I mean, do you want to carry on when it’s no longer your project?’ Fullbrook asked her.³³ She didn’t need to reply.

‘Bring Simon Case in,’ she demanded. The Cabinet secretary arrived a short while later.

‘Is it all over?’

‘Yes, Prime Minister, I think it probably is.’

A moment’s silence. Then she said, ‘I want to go off and talk to Hugh.’

Once she’d left the room, a debate took place on whether she should simply resign, or whether there needed to be a confidence motion. Case and Catsaras thought that it ought to be the latter because it gave the Conservative Party ownership over it, especially important given the still fragile state of the markets, and the paramount need for a legitimate and respected appointment process. Truss was back in the room. Her husband had said nothing to make her change her mind. ‘Get Graham Brady in’, was her next instruction. Whereas the PM visits the monarch to resign as Prime Minister, Tory MPs see the Chair of the 1922 Committee to request the Prime Minister resigns as party leader. Brady was indeed a powerful man.

Meanwhile, almost directly above the Cabinet Room upstairs in the Pillared Room, the Thursday morning meeting was not going well. No. 10 is a small place, so it's surprising how often one part of the building doesn't know what another is doing. Truss was due to be chairing it herself, but the minutes passed, and there was no sign of her. 'Where is the Prime Minister?' was the question everyone wanted answered. 'People sat around the room, staring at the floor: given the calls for her to resign, some speculated whether she had already gone,' said aide Clare Evans. 'She's not coming,' Coffey suddenly announced. 'She's up in the flat making calls. Let's get on with the meeting.' A blazing row broke out between her and Morton resulting in the latter storming out shouting, 'Just remember, I am the Chief Whip, not you, Thérèse.' Berry and Coffey kept trying to run the meeting as if nothing was awry, focusing the conversation on the communications and policy grid and what announcements would be coming up. 'Yes, there have been calls for her resignation, but these things happen all the time. It's business as usual,' Berry exhorted. 'Let's get back to our desks: we know what we've got to do,' chipped in Coffey. Many of those present were left thinking, 'This is f**king ridiculous. We won't even be here at the end of the day,' recalled one.

At the same time Brady was drinking coffee quietly at home in Battersea, mulling over the previous evening, and was preparing to call No. 10 to say that the damage made it impossible for Truss to continue. Though he had not counted the letters, he knew that the 54 threshold for a vote of no confidence had been passed. He was reaching for his phone when it began to vibrate. 'The Prime Minister would like to see you as a matter of urgency,' he was told. If not the grim reaper, there was something of the air of a well-heeled funeral director about Brady. When he arrived at the door of No. 10, it was rarely good news. To avoid the ubiquitous cameras that were building up outside No. 10 and its environs, he had taken a tube to St James's Park station rather than alighting at Westminster, which was closer. But as he strutted along the side of the park towards Downing Street to officiate at the ending of the shortest premiership in history, umbrella in hand to ward off the heavy rain, farcically a coachload of Chinese female

students pulled up by him. Out they poured and each girl demanded a selfie with the face that had become one of the most recognizable in British politics. A slightly baffled Brady smiled for photographs in one of the stranger scenes to come from a turbulent era in British politics.

He just managed to slink into Downing Street by the back entrance opposite the park, and was ushered quickly into the Cabinet Room.

‘Graham, how bad do you think it is?’

‘I think it’s pretty bad, Prime Minister.’

‘Is it recoverable?’

‘I don’t think it is.’

‘I’ve come to the same conclusion.’

The Chair of the 1922 Committee had witnessed the end of more premierships than any of his predecessors in the last hundred years. ‘Because she was falling on her sword, I did not see any need to talk about a confidence vote,’ he later recalled.³⁴

The deed done, Brady was shown to a side room, given a sandwich, a cup of tea and a phone charger, and told in the nicest possible way that he was being held hostage and couldn’t leave the building till the news was out there. No. 10 is also a family home for the Prime Minister. The decision taken, Hugh called their daughters’ school and discussed arrangements so that the girls could come back to Downing Street to be told by Hugh and Liz together. ‘Neither of the parents wanted their daughters to hear about her resignation first on the news,’ said an aide. Catsaras, meanwhile, called Buckingham Palace and arranged for the Prime Minister and the King to speak. The Palace made it clear that the King would much prefer to hear the news freshly from her, the first resignation of his monarchy. Finding a slot was difficult because, that morning, the King was seeing the President of Togo. But space in the diary was cleared, and he was told that the King would be free to speak at 12.45 p.m.

Truss asked Catsaras to summon her closest team, wanting to tell them ahead of the rest. ‘I think you should see the Prime Minister. She’s got something to tell you and the team,’ he announced. Truss told Porter first then Jarvis, who burst into tears. ‘I kept thinking that we had failed to

complete the project, that the libertarian dream was over,' she recalled.³⁵ When Hope went in, Jarvis put her hand on his shoulder visibly upset. He sat down opposite Truss in the Prime Minister's chair at the Cabinet table. 'The game is up, Jamie Hope,' she said, and, with a spring in her voice, added, 'I'm going to resign.'

'I think that's the right thing to do,' he told her.

'Do you?'

'Yes, it's better to go before you are pushed.'

She looked at him, and tried to smile. 'I've given it all I have,' she uttered quietly. Then into the room poured senior staff from the Private Office, the Policy Unit and communications teams.

'The Prime Minister has an announcement to make,' Catsaras said.

'I've spoken to the King and told him I am going to resign. I would like to thank you all for your hard work. It's clear to me that I don't have the support of the parliamentary party. I want to thank you.'

What struck several of those present was that it was the first time that they had heard her say the word 'thank you' to them.

Then something happened that may have changed the course of history. Hunt had been watching the events of Wednesday evening with a mixture of horror and anxiety. He realized that Truss would not last many hours more. He reflected on the two months of bitter campaigning over the summer following Johnson's resignation, and concluded that another two or three months' fighting would be perilous, given the fragility of the markets. So he went to see her for a meeting that was so secret no officials were present.

'Things are not working out, Jeremy. Should I put together a Cabinet of party unity, or should I resign and trigger a leadership election?' she asked him.

Hunt was not sure how serious she was about the first suggestion, but it was very evident to him that she thought the game was up. He decided not to engage with her first question, but to home in on the second. 'If there is to be a contest, Prime Minister, I regard it as essential it should not last more than a week.'

She looked at him, taken back, unsure what to say.

He continued, 'You have acted in the national interest in my six days in office, giving me a free hand to stabilize the markets. If you are going to go, I believe you should display the same statesmanlike concern for the nation and make it clear the transition must be quick.'

'But how can that be done?'

'How? Do not make the announcement to leave until you have had confirmation from the Conservative Party that the competition should last no more than a week.'³⁶

The PM gave him no indication whether or not she accepted his thesis.

After Hunt left her, he went back to his office and spoke to Brady, who was reported to be sympathetic to the plan, and then asked Berry to come and see him, who most definitely was not. Hunt had emphasized that Truss must go quickly. Brady wanted a quick election. This so soon after the last contest would likely be better for Sunak. Berry favoured Johnson, who was on holiday and would have benefited from more time. Trying to build trust with Berry, Hunt told him, 'You need to know I'm not putting my name forward or acting out of self-interest.' To allay Berry's continuing suspicions, he then asked for two Treasury officials to join them to explain more about the continuing market volatility and the risk that a protracted leadership contest might do enduring harm to the British economy. 'It went on for thirty minutes and they told me it would be doomsday for the British economy if there was a drawn-out ballot,' Berry recalled. Before leaving, he told the Treasury officials, 'I don't think it's any of your f**king business to talk about how the Conservative Party selects its leaders.' Hunt was left on tenterhooks whether the livid Party Chair would charge round to No. 10 to try to sabotage the 'within one week' proposal.

A parallel track pointing to the same destination was happening at the same time. Case's concerns for the country's economic stability and the state of its public finances over the previous days had been far from allayed by the departure of Truss. He worried greatly too that a protracted and divisive leadership election could spiral the markets out of control. He shared his concerns with Catsaras, and, independently of Hunt, decided off

his own initiative to speak to Brady to see what could be done to severely cut the leadership contest.

Another conspiracy theory was being born, alongside the ‘deep state’ killing off the Liz Truss premiership and her growth plan. This was that Boris Johnson was poised to return in glory to Downing Street to pick up where he had left off, and lead the party into a convincing election victory in 2023 or 2024. His closest supporters, including Nigel Adams, Conor Burns and Andrew Griffith, believe that he had the momentum to have secured one hundred MP supporters (backers said they had 102 pledges), and to have made it victorious through the MP rounds. The unique Johnson magic, they thought, would power him through, a blend of his undisputed personal popularity with the electorate and the party’s continuing unease with the man still blamed for vilely plotting his end just six long weeks before, Rishi Sunak. For a tantalizing few days Johnson thought he would run. ‘I’m going to go for this,’ he told his close ally Zahawi. Visions of returning in triumph to Downing Street danced before his eyes, Cincinnatus reborn, the plough discarded for the laurels and garlands. It fell to his wife Carrie to bring him back to earth. ‘Sorry, Boris, you just don’t have enough support to win,’ she told him. Sensible voices around him chipped in. ‘You will split the party down the middle if you stand,’ they said.³⁷ He reluctantly accepted it was all too soon and he was not properly prepared. He still had too much baggage from office, not least the forthcoming appearance before the Privileges Committee on his conduct (held from March 2023), and in his heart of hearts, much though he relished the speculation and the boost it gave to his future income-earning potential, he knew he didn’t have the puff.

Truss’s decision to resign taken, she became fixated on her resignation speech. When she asked for her political team, she was told, ‘Prime Minister, they are not here.’ Stein was banished, Jones on honeymoon, Porter on half term, speechwriter Asa Bennett on paternity leave.

‘Her resignation speech was really quite perfunctory,’ said an aide. ‘But she saved herself up for her departure speech five days later on 25 October.’ The day before in the Cabinet Room, she batted some ideas around with her

officials. ‘What I want to say is that the status quo put us into a doom loop, and that I found the politics were too hard because everyone likes protections,’ Truss said.

‘Prime Minister, the logical conclusion of what you’re saying is the status quo doesn’t work, and it’s really hard to take political advantage of Brexit,’ volunteered one present. There was a hushed silence around the room. No one knew how she would react.

‘No, that’s not quite right. We might have to find some way back, but not all the way: the Single Market and the Customs Union. My view is that it’s a choice between a Singapore or Norway option.’

‘But Norway is the worst of all outcomes – abiding by rules while having no say in making them.’

‘Yes. That’s why I wanted to get EU legislation off the statute book as quickly as possible, to stop that happening,’ Truss replied.

‘Will you say it’s Singapore or Norway in your speech today?’ said another.

‘No,’ she said emphatically. ‘Not today. But that’s the choice.’

But on 20 October, her mind was much more focused and clear. At 1.35 p.m. that Thursday, she stepped out of Downing Street and walked up to the podium. ‘I was elected by the Conservative Party with a mandate to change... And we set out a vision for a low tax, high growth economy – that would take advantage of the freedoms of Brexit.’ But, she said, she’d been unable to deliver on that and therefore would be resigning. Suddenly, all eyes were on her final words. ‘We have agreed there will be a leadership election to be completed in the next week. This will ensure we remain on a path to deliver our fiscal plans and maintain our country’s economic stability and national security. I will remain as Prime Minister until a successor has been chosen.’³⁸

To her great credit, at the very end, she did the right thing for the country.

The Verdict: Retain the Confidence of the Party?

The tenth and final rule is that the Prime Minister has to remember the importance of maintaining their support among their MPs. Wednesday's PMQs was when the truth began to dawn: she had lost her MPs. 'That was the moment she read the room and realized how bad it was. She was different when she came back into the building that night,' said Canzini.³⁹ True, she never had a mandate from a majority of her MPs from the beginning (nor indeed from the electorate). Truss came a long way second in the final ballot of MPs with just 113 votes, 24 behind Sunak's 137, and only 8 ahead of Penny Mordaunt on 105 (hence the notion that only 5 of Truss's votes needed to switch to Mordaunt for the latter to win). Less than one third of Conservative MPs voted for her. Far short of one third of the parliamentary party were believers in her: she won their vote as the candidate most likely to beat Sunak. Simmering resentment against her at party HQ didn't help her cause. 'It was dysfunctional from day one: from the moment she took over, they made it clear they hadn't wanted her and wouldn't help,' said Berry.⁴⁰ But a shrewder leader would have built bridges, reached out and tried to win MPs over.

Because the rules required 15% of her MPs submitting letters to Brady to trigger a vote of confidence it was not certain until that last week that she could be unseated. Some of Sunak's supporters undoubtedly kept up pressure on her throughout, but even Sunak himself until these last few days didn't believe he could oust her before the general election, and was thinking ahead to plans outside politics. The vast majority of her critics, personal and ideological, thought any attempt to knife her would be counter-productive. 'There was a grim determination among MPs to make it work with Liz, a sense of "we can't possibly go through that again",' said one insider. 'Let's just get through to January, then all will be OK,' Kwarteng had told her shortly before leaving for the IMF in Washington.⁴¹

The three dramas in the first half of the week, above all the fracking debacle, made the end inevitable, just as Johnson's more protracted dramas, over Partygate and rogue MPs Owen Paterson and Chris Pincher, did. Perhaps in an earlier era – before Brexit made MPs think the unthinkable time and time again – she might have struggled on. But an earlier era would

not have made Liz Truss Prime Minister; only the febrile and frantic atmosphere of the early 2020s could do that.

The tenth rule is the least forgiving. Within hours of her losing her MPs, resignation and the end of the shortest premiership in British history was inevitable.



As Prime Minister, Truss always looked over her shoulder at what Sunak and his supporters were doing. Yet she didn't fall because of their machinations, but because of her own incompetence and unwillingness to understand the art of the possible

THE VERDICT: 'DEEP STATE' OR DEEP INCOMPETENCE?

Since leaving the office of Prime Minister, Liz Truss, in her book *Ten Years to Save the West* and in a series of public interventions, speeches and interviews, has articulated her belief that the 'deep state', i.e. powerful administrative and establishment forces, was opposed to her dynamic vision and ultimately defeated her project. Defiant as ever, she wrote, 'The economic establishment used its huge and unrivalled influence over the markets to undermine confidence in the elected government, stir up political resistance and force it to change course.'¹ To her the blame lies wholly with others. Kwarteng acknowledges his responsibility. She does not. Nor would she accept blame or apologize when her 26,000 majority was turned into a 640-vote defeat by the voters of her South West Norfolk constituency in the July 2024 general election.

Truss at 10, throughout its ten chapters, suggests that her bold vision, and she herself, fell not because her championing of growth was wrong – it was the right prescription after fifteen years of stagnation since the global financial crisis – but because of her total failure to understand the nature of leadership and the job of being Prime Minister. Every successful leader, including her admired Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, knew that they could only move at the pace at which the system they inherited was able to respond and key stakeholders be persuaded.

One by one, she broke all of the 'ten rules' paradigm for successful premierships discussed in the preface. Once in No. 10, powerful institutional and political forces come into play underpinning all PMs, however deficient in the office. To fall so quickly was careless and eminently avoidable. Only breaking all ten rules so swiftly can explain it when my earlier methodology, as discussed in the preface, failed to do so.

1 Secure the power base

She never understood that she would need a secure platform on which to build her project. She assumed like Johnson that her base was the party membership in the country, rather than her own MPs, whom she made surprisingly little attempt to bond with or win over. Unlike Johnson, who won his own mandate at the 2019 general election, she never had her own popular mandate for her project, and a failure to achieve legitimacy for her radically different policies ultimately undid her.

2 Have a clear and realistic plan for government

She had a clear plan, which was intellectually and internally consistent. But she completely misjudged both its political acceptability – no democratic mandate for radical new policy – and the economic reality – which was not at all similar to when such policies had been ‘the accepted wisdom’ during the 1980s and 1990s.² In this respect, Truss did not understand that the past is not a set of prescriptive lessons. The circumstances of late 2022 were very different to those of the 1980s when growth averaged over 2.5 per cent per annum, and even of mid-2022 when the policies were being hatched, and required political and economic adaptations that embraced those realities.

3 Appoint the best Cabinet/team

Hiring and firing the right people is an essential requirement for the Prime Minister. She failed to appoint the most capable and balanced team to Cabinet or a sufficiently experienced team in No. 10 for all the stars who might have contributed (no Gove or Javid, and only bringing in Hunt and Shapps too late in the day). Nor did she lead her ministers and her staff in Downing Street in an inspiring manner that unified and brought out the best in them.

4 Command the big events

A key skill for all Prime Ministers is to judge their historic opportunity on coming to power, to seize on the major events that arise for all Prime

Ministers and turn them to their advantage. She failed to comprehend the impact of the deterioration of the economy since the summer of 2022, to understand Britain's debt vulnerability and the need to reassure financial markets, to extract full benefit from her energy support intervention, and above all to rise to the occasion and turn the death of Queen Elizabeth II into a moment to unify and settle the nation.

5 Be credible and highly regarded abroad

The Prime Minister is Britain's senior political figure abroad. At best the PM can leverage the office to achieve significant global attention to enhance their position at home; at worst, they must avoid international ridicule, such as she brought upon herself. British Prime Ministers traditionally crave respect from the White House, but she antagonized President Biden to her detriment, prompting the most humiliating presidential putdown in modern history. She authored no international initiatives while in office, could not build on the prominence she had achieved as Foreign Secretary over the war in Ukraine and her premiership was swamped by domestic concerns before she could make a positive mark abroad. The exception was her pathbreaking work as PM towards what became the Windsor Framework in Northern Ireland.

6 Learn how to be Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is never the finished article when they arrive at No. 10. They have to possess the character that allows them to *grow* in the job. Nothing prepares a politician to be PM. Ripping out the heart of No. 10 with no historically grounded idea about how to improve it did not help her. Truss missed out, too, on the most valuable single post for learning how to do the job: Leader of the Opposition. The best PMs learn to become storytellers and teachers, and learn to act with dignity and decorum. They must learn to be communicators. Prime Ministers are leaders of their party, the government and the nation. They have to lay aside tribalism once in No. 10 and reach out to new constituencies in all three domains. They must be inclusive and act with magnanimity. Truss never made this transition. She

failed as leader of party, government and nation. To the end, she was too narrow.

7 Avoid major policy failures

Prime Ministers can survive policy failures before they reach No. 10, and minor mistakes once they arrive. But early and large mistakes in office, as she committed, are fatal. May damaged her options by insisting on a hard Brexit at the outset. Prime Ministers need one quality above all: *judgement*. Truss lacked it, and she hurtled the government with unnecessary haste into bold policy announcements that were premature and ill-conceived.

8 Maintain a reputation for economic competence

The Prime Minister is the First Lord of the Treasury, and their most elemental job as head of government is to ensure the country doesn't go broke, or risk going broke. As an accountant, it is doubly surprising that she failed to understand this. She singly failed to understand the importance of gaining the trust and respect of key economic stakeholders. She displayed astonishing ignorance about how markets work. Even when warning lights were flashing crazily, she failed to heed them and take remedial action early enough.

9 Avoid U-turns

Nothing undermines confidence in a leader more than a U-turn on the central planks of their fundamental policy. If the leader has to execute one, they have to be brave enough to take the blame themselves, not pin it on others and pretend it hasn't happened, or that they were not themselves responsible.

10 Retain the confidence of the party

Since the office emerged in 1721, the Prime Minister owes their continuation in office to their base in Parliament. Lose it, and they are doomed. She never understood that a Prime Minister can never take their MPs for granted, especially necessary given she had so few allies and she was not their first choice in the leadership election. The fracking shambles

destroyed what little credibility she had left. By the evening of Wednesday 19 October 2022 she had alienated her MPs to such an extent that nobody even bothered to count the number of letters of no confidence, because they had so far exceeded the 15 per cent threshold.

Was the ‘deep state’ to blame for her precipitous fall?

The Bank of England sale of gilts on the day of the Mini-Budget and the MPC’s interest rate rise just before it might have been anticipated, but she was responsible for the failure to establish a better line between No. 10 and the Bank that would have alerted her and ameliorated the risk. The Treasury found it difficult to land warnings before the fiscal event. Chopping out its top man just before though was an act of extraordinary self-harm, from which Truss and Kwarteng were ultimately the losers. There was no coordinated ‘deep state’ attempt to unseat her and defeat her project. A state apparatus weakened by the Tories certainly did not perform at its peak, and it was down to officials, in No. 10, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, to pull the country out of a nosedive that would have put the national finances in the greatest peril since the 1976 IMF Crisis.

Robert Peston has pointed the finger of blame in particular at the Bank of England’s ‘incompetence’ for undermining the Truss project.³ ‘The Bank did not identify the risk to financial stability from LDI and neutralize it before any shock materialized – whether from Truss or elsewhere – and it did not communicate this potential risk to the Treasury for Truss and Kwarteng to be aware in their Mini-Budget planning,’ he said later. He added that it was ‘the structure and the timing of the end of the bailout, and the fear in Whitehall that its end would see gilt prices tank again without a complete reversal of the Mini-Budget that triggered both Kwarteng’s sacking and Truss’s resignation.’⁴ Jon Moynihan has argued similarly the lion’s share of the blame should go to the Bank of England. Do they protest too much?

The evidence in this book points to a far more nuanced conclusion. Ultimately, in any disaster, blame is always multi-causal. But in the British system primary responsibility must always rest on the Prime Minister and Chancellor and particularly when, as here, they deliberately kicked away

the struts of the financial framework that in the past provided stability and predictability. She cannot escape the primary blame, nor Kwarteng for not stopping her.

The Truss premiership was expensive. The best Prime Ministers enhance the country and husband its standing. But Britain's reputation abroad suffered, and has taken time to recover. The British economy suffered, and many individuals and companies are still worse off because of what happened, as David Smith has shown, engendering a lasting bitterness. Mortgage approvals fell and rates rose. The case for free-market policies suffered because of the way in which the programme was rolled out: the future is likely to be more statist and interventionist, not less. The standing of the OBR was boosted and tax burden on high earners increased, two of the many other unintended consequences. The Conservative Party suffered directly in the July 2024 general election, with 'Partygate' under Johnson and the mini-budget under Truss prompting the biggest falls in Tory support, according to John Curtice. The Party's long-standing reputation for economic competence and cool-headed pragmatism had been severely tested since 2016, but the final thread was snapped by Liz Truss. The British state suffered from her trashing of its institutions and personnel hard on the heels of Johnson's systematic undermining of them.

To amend F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*, 'they were careless people, Boris and Liz – they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money, reveries or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess that they had made'.⁵ They were both gifted people with special talents and opportunities: but they spectacularly squandered them.

Britain has had a procession of underperforming Prime Ministers. They all fell short in some of the key rules of good premiership. Johnson, the subject of the previous book in the series, and now Truss, comfortably outdid them all in their wilful inability to rise to the requirement of thoughtful and responsible stewardship the job demands. One outcome of her premiership may be a cautionary tale. Robert Peel and Ramsay MacDonald taught future Conservative and Labour leaders not to risk

splitting their party. She perhaps will teach them not to repeat her basic errors, not to 'do a Liz Truss' by breaking all ten rules of good premiership. In that way, if no other, perhaps her forty-nine days might at least have a gilt lining.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would never have happened without the insights and kindness of very large numbers of people, most of whom are anonymous. But you know who you are, and we hope you know how grateful we are.

It was written with the smallest team of any of the eight books in the series on recently departed Prime Ministers. My greatest thanks are due to Jonathan Meakin, with whom I have collaborated on over ten books, and whose intellect, historical knowledge and efficiency are without parallel. We were joined on this project late last year by Luca Boot, who worked tirelessly for over six months. They have been brilliant to work with, professionally and socially.

The methodology has remained broadly the same over the eight books since the one on John Major. We discuss the ‘architecture’ together, i.e., how many ‘floors’ (chapters) and how many ‘rooms’ (subheadings) on each floor. We then ‘see’ the book on the table between us. I then conduct the interviews, over 120 in this case. The team produces the briefings for each chapter, integrating these with other published and documentary material, and then I have the easy and fun part, writing the book. The book is then read over several times by expert witnesses for fairness and accuracy. This book more than any other in the series has benefited from voluminous contemporary documents, some of which had to be sourced opaquely.

We were blessed with Atlantic as our publisher. Writing and publishing books on contemporary history takes the craft to an altogether different level of complexity. We reached even higher levels in this book. Particular thanks are due to the brilliant team: editor James Pulford, copy-editor Tamsin Shelton, agent Matthew Cole and pre-press director Emma Heyworth-Dunn. Thanks also to Martin Soames at SMB for his expertise and advice.

Thank you to our diligent early readers, most of whom remained anonymous. Stuart Ball, Tom Egerton, Bill Jones, John Jefferies and Lewis Baston can be mentioned though by name. We would like to thank fellow historians for their guidance and support, in particular Tim Bale, John Bew and Charles Moore.

We are so grateful for the work of other writers. Biographical works by Harry Cole and James Heale and by Ben Riley-Smith were hugely important in laying the groundwork. As always, credit to Tim Shipman, the Boswell of Brexit, for his outstanding insights.

With thanks to the club of co-authors and senior researchers on earlier PM books, who have always been ready to offer help: Chris Ballinger, Peter Snowden, Daniel Collings, Guy Lodge, Kunal Khatri, Illias Thoms, Raymond Newell and Tom Egerton.

Particular thanks to my outstanding Institute for Government colleagues Hannah White, Alex Thomas, Emma Norris, Jordan Urban and Rhys Clyne.

The books have all been boosted by very fine reporting and commentary in the media. We also spoke to a number of people in political broadcasting. We do not think you would appreciate it if we thanked you by name here, so instead we thank you silently.

To all the anonymous and meticulous writers for Wikipedia, thank you. We guess that more authors rely on your work than is acknowledged.

This book was written when I was also the Head in extraordinary circumstances at Epsom College. My thanks go to senior team colleagues, in particular Paul Williams, Helen Keevill, Marisa Bosa, Becky Brown, Nick Russell, Mark Tobin, Richard Alton and Paul Ratcliffe; my history and politics colleagues, including Andy Bustard, James Dunn and Luke Fisher; governors, in particular Alastair Wells and Alex Russell; and incomparable EA Sophie Lawrence. Determined that I would not in any way let my attention on the school – its students, staff and parents – suffer from my writing, I invaded every spare moment to find the time to work on the book. It meant I have not been very good or present company for the last eleven months, so I would particularly like to thank my life-enhancing wife Sarah for her forbearance, and my children Jessica, Susie and Adam who saw less

of their father than they should have done. In my family, friends and colleagues, my life has been truly blessed.

Anthony Seldon

July 2024

NOTES

PREFACE

- 1 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk-politics/2022/08/whyliz-truss-will-fail>

INTRODUCTION

- 1 For an exploration of this fascinating topic see Steve Richards, *The Prime Ministers We Never Had: Success and Failure from Butler to Corbyn*, London, Atlantic Books, 2021.
- 2 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 3 Some sources record Tambroni's tenure as 123 days. Either way, even the shortest-serving Prime Minister of the Italian Republic outlasted the shortest-serving British one.
- 4 <https://treasury.gov.au/publication/economic-roundup-issue-4-2011/economic-roundup-issue-4-2011/arthur-fadden-treasurer-in-a-golden-age>
- 5 Anthony Seldon with Jonathan Meakin and Illias Thoms, *The Impossible Office?: The History of the British Prime Minister*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, pp. 92–4.
- 6 William Hague, *Pitt the Younger*, London, Harper Perennial, 2005, p. 160.
- 7 Ibid., p. 173.
- 8 Margot Asquith, *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith*, London, Butterworth, 1922, p. 75.
- 9 Harry Cole and James Heale, *Out of the Blue: The Inside Story of the Unexpected Rise and Rapid Fall of Liz Truss*, London, HarperCollins, p. 224.
- 10 John Colville, *The Fringes of Power: Downing Street Diaries 1940–1955*, Volume 2, Sevenoaks, Sceptre Publishing, 1986–87, p. 392.

- 11 Robert Rhodes James, *Anthony Eden*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986, p. 597.
- 12 Lord Owen, 'The effect of Prime Minister Anthony Eden's illness on his decision-making during the Suez crisis', *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*, Volume 98, Issue 6, June 2005, pp. 387–402.
- 13 Gill Bennett, *The Zinoviev Letter of 1924: A Most Extraordinary and Mysterious Business*, London, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 1999, pp. 91–2.
- 14 <https://www.elizabethtruss.com/news/speech-cpac-2024>
- 15 Liz Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West: Lessons from the Only Conservative in the Room*, London, Biteback Publishing, 2024, p. 252.
- 16 <https://open.spotify.com/episode/0hOsqQXTJycO9mKXLrvk7O>

1: SECURE THE POWER BASE

- 1 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 236.
- 2 Ibid., p. 239.
- 3 Interview, Sophie Jarvis.
- 4 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/07/10/liz-truss-would-cut-taxes-day-one-prime-minister>
- 5 Interview, Ranil Jayawardena.
- 6 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/12/jacob-rees-mogg-and-nadine-dorries-back-liz-truss-for-tory-leadership>
- 7 <https://conservativehome.com/2022/07/12/our-latest-next-tory-leader-survey-mordaunt-leads-badenoch-by-under-ten-votes-in-over-eight-hundred>
- 8 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/09/25/ben-wallace-take-everything-putin-does-seriously-man-without>
- 9 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2022/jul/13/conservative-leadership-race-penny-mordaunt-rishi-sunak-liz-truss-uk-politics-latest-live>
- 10 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/14/lost-to-spam-truss-had-only-one-thing-to-offer-it-was-still-the-convict>

- 11 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/jul/09/revealed-officials-raised-flag-over-nadim-zahawis-tax-affairs-before-he-was-appointed-chancellor>
- 12 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/20/nadhim-zahawi-agreed-on-penalty-to-settle-tax-bill-worth-millions>
- 13 <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/politics/article/liz-truss-has-the-experience-to-stand-up-for-britain-wcrdqp6d2>
- 14 <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/tory-leadership-debate-liz-truss-b2124506.html>
- 15 'Leaked documents call Penny Mordaunt's gender self-ID claims into question', *The Sunday Times*, 17 July 2022.
- 16 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/anne-marie-trevelyan-penny-mordaunt-b2125465.html>
- 17 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/14/david-frost-grave-reservations-penny-mordaunt-tory-leader>
- 18 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 19 Interview, Jake Berry.
- 20 Interview, Penny Mordaunt.
- 21 Interview, Gavin Williamson.
- 22 <https://metro.co.uk/2022/07/20/liz-truss-says-shes-ready-to-hit-the-ground-but-not-running-17038078>.
[https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/20/rishi-sunak-penny-mordaunt-liz-truss-final-round-tory-leadership-race?](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/20/rishi-sunak-penny-mordaunt-liz-truss-final-round-tory-leadership-race?filterKeyEvents=false&page=with:block-62d988cf8f081aa0b140574c#block-62d988cf8f081aa0b140574c)
- 23 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/08/tory-members-over-60-white-male-choice-of-leader>
- 24 <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/tory-leadership-debate-liz-truss-b2124506.html>
- 25 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2022/jul/21/tory-leadership-race-liz-truss-rishi-sunak-latest-politics-live?filterKeyEvents=false&page=with:block-62d988cf8f081aa0b140574c#block-62d988cf8f081aa0b140574c>
- 26 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/23/thatcher-ministers-liz-truss-tax-cut-plans-patten-lamont-rifkind>

- 27 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/23/rishi-sunak-vows-uk-crisis-footing-becomes-pm>
- 28 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 29 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNTv06tpuSw>
- 30 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/kemi-badenoch-lizz-truss-is-a-maverick-who-gets-things-done-x29d690tf>
- 31 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 32 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/aug/19/gove-backs-sunak-and-says-truss-taking-holiday-from-reality>
- 33 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/08/09/first-tory-mp-switches-support-rishi-sunak-liz-truss-leadership>.
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/08/12/first-cabinet-minister-switches-support-rishi-sunak-liz-truss>
- 34 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/13/poll-of-tory-members-gives-liz-truss-22-point-lead-to-be-next-prime-minister>
- 35 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/aug/01/liz-truss-plan-to-cut-11bn-in-whitehall-waste-ludicrous>
- 36 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 261.
- 37 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-17815769>
- 38 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-11065397/I-dont-want-party-fooled-appearances-way-Cabinet-writes-NADINE-DORRIES.html>
- 39 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 40 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 41 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/sep/03/the-more-tory-voters-see-of-liz-truss-the-less-they-like-her-polls-show>
- 42 Interview, Asa Bennett.
- 43 Anthony Seldon, *Major: A Political Life*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997, pp. 117–28.
- 44 Anthony Seldon and Raymond Newell, *Johnson at 10*, London, Atlantic, 2024, pp. 564–8.
- 45 Interview, Michael Gove.

2: HAVE A CLEAR AND REALISTIC PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT

- 1 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/03/suspect-old-friend-liz-truss-will-radical-british-prime-minister>
- 2 For more discussion of this topic see Seldon et al., *The Impossible Office?*
- 3 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2022/09/05/liz-truss-speech-full-boris-johnson-rishi-sunak-deliver>
- 4 Ben Pimlott, *Harold Wilson*, London, HarperCollins, 1992, p. 618.
- 5 <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v15/n02/peter-clarke/lawson-s-case>
- 6 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/03/suspect-old-friend-liz-truss-will-radical-british-prime-minister>
- 7 For a detailed look at the thinking behind the Truss project see Jeremy Cliffe, 'Liz Truss and the Rise of the Libertarian Right', *New Statesman*, 28 September 2022, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/conservatives/2022/09/liz-truss-rise-market-millennials-free-market-ideology>
- 8 Letter, *The Times*, 8 August 1980.
- 9 <https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/other/sotu.html>
- 10 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 13 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 14 Kwasi Kwarteng, *War and Gold: A Five-Hundred-Year History of Empires, Adventures and Debt*, London, Bloomsbury, 2014.
- 15 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 16 Interview, Shabbir Merali.
- 17 Interview.
- 18 <https://dominiccummings.substack.com/p/snippets-8-the-human-handgrenade>
- 19 Anthony Seldon and Peter Snowdon, *Cameron at 10*, London, William Collins, 2015, p. 406.
- 20 Interview, Adam Jones.
- 21 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 22 Anthony Seldon, *May at 10*, London, Biteback Publishing, 2019, p. 377.

- 23 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2018/06/25/britain-must-start-up-state-chief-disruptor/>
- 24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-secretary-to-the-treasury-liz-truss-speech-to-the-london-school-of-economics>
- 25 Interview, Philip Hammond.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Interview, Shabbir Merali.
- 28 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-secretary-to-the-treasury-liz-truss-speech-to-the-london-school-of-economics>
- 29 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/jun/21/williamsonlosing-fight-with-treasury-for-rise-in-defence-spending>
- 30 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chief-secretary-to-the-treasury-liz-truss-speech-to-the-london-school-of-economics>
- 31 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-liz-truss-building-the-network-of-liberty>
- 32 Interview, Adam Jones.
- 33 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/international-trade-dinner-speech>
- 34 Interview, Adam Jones.
- 35 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 36 Interview, Philip Hammond.
- 37 Interview, Charles Moore.
- 38 Interview, Philip Hammond.
- 39 <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2022/08/tory-leadership-contest-thatcher-truss-sunak/671014>
- 40 Richard Cockett, *Thinking the Unthinkable: Think-tanks and the Economic Counterrevolution, 1931–1983*, London, HarperCollins, 1995.
<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/conservatives/2022/09/liz-truss-rise-market-millennials-free-market-ideology>
- 41 Correspondence with the author, Jamie Hope, 20 March 2024.
- 42 Interview, Liz Truss.

- 43 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/03/suspect-old-friend-liz-truss-will-radical-british-prime-minister>
- 44 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 45 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63442813>
- 46 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 47 Interview, Simon Clarke.
- 48 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 49 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicspending/bulletins/ukgovernmentdebtanddeficitforeurostatmaast/september2022>
- 50 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/may/27/rishi-sunaks-tax-rises-three-of-the-biggest-examined>
- 51 Ben Riley-Smith, *The Right to Rule: Thirteen Years, Five Prime Ministers and the Implosion of the Tories*, London, John Murray, 2023, p. 283.
- 52 <https://www.conservatives.com/our-plan/conservative-party-manifesto-2019>
- 53 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 54 Interview, Ranil Jayawardena.
- 55 Interview, Chris Philp.
- 56 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 57 <https://www.ft.com/content/736a695d-61f6-4e84-a567-fb92ed2a3dca>
- 58 Interview, Gerard Lyons.
- 59 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/aug/05/truss-irresponsible-for-threatening-to-review-bank-of-england-remit>
- 60 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-kwasi-kwarteng-sets-out-economic-priorities-in-first-meeting-with-market-leaders>
- 61 <https://thecritic.co.uk/issues/december-january-2023/how-did-it-all-go-so-wrong-for-liz-truss/>
- 62 Interview, Alex Boyd.
- 63 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9491>
- 64 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 270.

- 65 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/money/19437407/household-bills-soar-energy-food-mortgage>
- 66 <https://www.ft.com/content/0d4e8e8c-a9f5-409b-86b8-884304ce0568>
- 67 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/21/liz-truss-rip-green-planning-laws-bid-kickstart-housebuilding>
- 68 Interview, Liz Truss.

3: APPOINT THE BEST CABINET/TEAM

- 1 Andrew Blick in Foreword to George Jones, *The Power of the Prime Minister: 50 Yearson*, London, The Constitution Society, 2016, p. 7.
- 2 Hannis Taylor, *The Origin and Growth of the English Constitution: Part Two*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1900, p. 462.
- 3 For further discussion of this matter see Anthony Seldon and Jonathan Meakin, *The Cabinet Office, 1916–2016: The Birth of Modern Government*, London, Biteback Publishing, 2016, pp. 1–16.
- 4 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 5 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 6 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 7 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 8 Interview, Daniel Johnson.
- 9 Interview, Adam Jones.
- 10 Interview, Penny Mordaunt.
- 11 <https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/andrew-marr/andrewmarr-truss-pm-weaker-cabinet-allies>
- 12 <https://twitter.com/GavinBarwell/status/1567045090702499840>
- 13 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/sep/01/shes-totally-lost-it-inside-story-of-the-unravelling-of-liz-truss-premiership>
- 14 Interview, Wendy Morton.
- 15 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 16 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/liz-truss-s-plan-to-shake-up-downing-street>
- 17 Seldon et al., *The Impossible Office?*, pp. 165–6.
- 18 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 276.

- 19 Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 206.
- 20 <https://www.ft.com/content/4761449a-6353-4bf2-aa45-dfeefbbed519>
- 21 <https://conservativehome.com/2022/09/08/why-trusss-sweeping-reorganisation-of-the-downing-street-operation-could-spell-trouble-for-her>
- 22 <https://reaction.life/why-tom-scholar-of-the-treasury-was-sacked>
- 23 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/08/13/meet-mandarin-liz-trusss-sights-takes-treasury-orthodoxy>
- 24 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 25 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 26 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2022/08/13/meet-mandarin-liz-trusss-sights-takes-treasury-orthodoxy>
- 27 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 28 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/pm-was-right-to-sack-tom-scholar-from-the-treasury-lldjlngxj>
- 31 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/sep/14/kwasi-kwarteng-sacking-tom-scholar-marks-shift-away-from-impartial-advice>
- 32 <https://twitter.com/nickmacpherson2/status/1567907661584236545>
- 33 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-62869880>

4: COMMAND THE BIG EVENTS

- 1 http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/january/10/newsid_2518000/2518957.stm
- 2 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/liz-truss-my-part-in-her-downfall>
- 3 <https://www.ft.com/content/6f48f0ca-a6d7-11e9-b6ee-3cdf3174eb89c>
- 4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/public-spending-statistics-release-november-2022/public-spending-statistics-november-2022>. See section 3.1.
- 5 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 <https://heywoodquarterly.com/the-mysteries-of-the-golden-triangle/>

- 8 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 9 Interview, Clare Evans.
- 10 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-minister-liz-truss-statement-6-september-2022>
- 11 <https://www.navylookout.com/royal-navy-nuclear-deterrent-submarines-conducting-increasingly-long-patrols>
- 12 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-07/debates/DC1207A6-90E7-424D-A507-320A4E1D92EE/PrimeMinister>
- 13 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/liz-truss-s-first-pmq-s-felt-like-a-dress-rehearsal>
- 14 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/who-won-pmq-s-liz-truss-keir-starmer-7fwmql57c>
- 15 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2022/sep/07/liz-truss-cabinet-news-pm-therese-coffey-uk-politics-live?page=with:block-6318ca758f08aab4f5b4cf67&filterKeyEvents=false#liveblog-navigation>
- 16 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-liz-truss-opening-speech-on-the-energy-policy-debate>
- 17 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-09-08/debates/25d439a2-1946-4793-8022-e2a4ba8d3644/CommonsChamber>
- 18 Paul Bolton and Iona Stewart, *Domestic Energy Prices*, House of Commons Library, 1 March 2024, p. 9. See also ‘Economic and Fiscal Outlook’, Office for Budget Responsibility, March 2023, p. 57.
- 19 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/08/elizabeth-ii-enjoyed-robust-health-throughout-long-reign>
- 20 Interview, Nadhim Zahawi.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 <https://it.usembassy.gov/readout-of-the-presidents-call-with-allies-and-partners-2>
- 23 <https://www.gbnews.com/royal/queen-news-queen-elizabeth-ii-liz-truss-balmoral>

- 24 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-the-death-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii>
- 25 <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/liz-truss-monarchy-republicanism-abolish-b2128076.html>
- 26 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/11/liz-truss-not-accompanying-king-charles-on-uk-tour-says-no-10>
- 27 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-09/debates/7E1BA553-600D-41B4-BAB9-849A02B254C3/TributesToHerLateMajestyTheQueen>
- 28 <https://privycouncil.independent.gov.uk/privy-council/the-accession-council>
- 29 Interview, Penny Mordaunt.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Robert Hardman, *Charles III: New King, New Court. The Inside Story*, London, Macmillan, 2024, p. 110.
- 32 ‘The Conduct of Sir Gavin Williamson MP’, Independent Expert Panel, House of Commons, 4 September 2023, pp. 8–9.

5: BE CREDIBLE AND HIGHLY REGARDED ABROAD

- 1 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/16/uk-aid-strategy-liz-truss-double-whammy-world-poor>
- 2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretary-gives-keynote-speech-in-ukraine-17-february-2022>
- 3 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/feb/12/liz-truss-instagram-diplomacy-five-photos-a-day-foreign-secretary-flickr>
- 4 <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-invasion-predictions-wrong-intelligence/32275740.html>
- 5 <https://www.ft.com/content/315346dc-e1bd-485c-865b-979297f3fcf5>
- 6 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/liz-truss-will-declare-china-an-official-threat-for-the-first-time-3bk7jwqjx>
- 7 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 8 Frost’s resignation letter does not give a clear reason for his resignation, other than that it had been agreed that he’d leave in January and that the

news had leaked. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lord-frosts-resignation-letter-and-the-prime-ministers-response>

- 9 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/03/26/liz-truss-right-now-differences-eu-seem-lot-smaller>
- 10 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9560>
- 11 Christopher Meyer, *DC Confidential: The Controversial Memoirs of Britain's Ambassador to the US at the Time of 9/11 and the Iraq War*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005, p. 1.
- 12 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-windsor-framework>
- 13 <https://twitter.com/JoeBiden/status/1306334039557586944>
- 14 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/roberthart/2022/09/20/theywouldnt-have-sat-me-back-there-trump-scoffs-at-bidens-seating-position-at-queens-funeral/>
- 15 <https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1572218921347866624?lang=en>
- 16 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/09/21/remarks-by-president-biden-and-prime-minister-liz-truss-of-the-united-kingdom-before-bilateral-meeting>
- 17 <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2022/oct/16/joe-biden-liz-truss-tax-cuts-a-mistake-and-i-wasnt-the-only-one-who-thought-so>
- 18 Interview, Kim Darroch.
- 19 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 20 <https://www.politico.eu/article/liz-truss-uk-seeks-her-own-path-back-to-europe>. <https://www.politeia.co.uk/macrons-european-political-community-and-britains-role-in-it>. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/the-european-political-community>
- 21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/g7-leaders-joint-statement-on-ukraine-11-october-2022>
- 22 Seldon and Newell, *Johnson at 10*, p. 564.
- 23 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/ukpolitics-62682448>

6: LEARN HOW TO BE PRIME MINISTER

- 1 Dennis Kavanagh and Anthony Seldon, *The Powers Behind the Prime Minister: The Hidden Influence of Number 10*, London, HarperCollins,

1999, p. 128.

- 2 Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 203.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 268, 269.
- 4 Interview, Philip Hammond.
- 5 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/mark-field-praises-liz-truss>
- 6 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 7 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 8 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 9 Interview, Penny Mordaunt.
- 10 Interview, Philip Hammond.

7: AVOID MAJOR POLICY FAILURES

- 1 Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, pp. 236, 239.
- 2 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 3 <https://www.pwc.co.uk/services/economics/insights/uk-economic-outlook/september-2022.html>
- 4 <https://www.pwc.co.uk/economic-services/ukeyo/ukeyo-september-2022.pdf>, p. 4.
- 5 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 6 <https://obr.uk/efo/economic-and-fiscal-outlook-march-2022>
- 7 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/september2022>
- 8 https://obr.uk/docs/dlm_uploads/Letter_to_TSC_Potential_Emergency_Budget.pdf
- 9 <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/158/treasury-committee/news/173401/bank-of-england-confirms-details-of-emergency-bond-buying-incorrespondence-with-treasury-committee/>
- 10 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-growth-plan-2022-speech>
- 11 'The Growth Plan 2022', HM Treasury, September 2022, p. 25.
- 12 Ibid., p. 6.
- 13 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-growth-plan-2022-speech>
- 14 Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 242.
- 15 <https://ifs.org.uk/articles/mini-budget-response>

- 16 <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-11244431/ALEX-BRUMMER-Kwasi-Kwarteng-delivers-genuine-Tory-Budget-spells-end-Treasury-doomsters.html>
- 17 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/09/23/kwasi-kwartengs-budget-moment-history-will-radically-transform>
- 18 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-09-23/debates/6F82FA4B-DB6B-4E89-BA39-4ABEA1045ABF/TheGrowthPlan>
- 19 <https://x.com/guardian/status/1573416993545502730>
- 20 <https://www.ft.com/content/05a3c185-2e93-484f-bc56-380186230a1f>
- 21 <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2022/09/22/liz-trusss-selective-reaganomics-wont-work>
- 22 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/23/kwarteng-accused-of-reckless-mini-budget-for-the-rich-as-pound-crashes>
- 23 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/letter/2022/october/letter-from-jon-cunliffe-ldi-5-october-2022>
- 24 *Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg*, BBC1, 25 September 2022.
- 25 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 26 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-growth-plan-implementation>
- 27 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/news/2022/september/statement-from-the-governor-of-the-boe>
- 28 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63041679>
- 29 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63051702>
- 30 Seldon, *Blair Unbound*, p. 13.
- 31 <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/what-is-ldi-liability-driven-investment-strategy-explained-2022-10-04/>
- 32 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/letter/2022/october/letter-from-jon-cunliffe-ldi-5-october-2022>
- 33 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/market-notices/2022/september/apf-gilt-sales-22-september>
- 34 Interview, Liz Truss. See also Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 247.

- 35 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/news/2022/september/bank-of-england-announces-gilt-market-operation>
- 36 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/quarterly-bulletin/2023/2023/financial-stability-buy-sell-tools-a-gilt-market-case-study>
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/speech/2022/october/current-monetary-policy-opening-remarks-by-jonathan-haskel>
- 39 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0d3flmh>. See also <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/liz-truss-bbc-radio-economy-28109436>
- 40 <https://labourlist.org/2022/09/british-power-to-the-british-people-starmers-2022-conference-speech>
- 41 <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/43901-voting-intention-con-21-lab-54-28-29-sep-2022>
- 42 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/readout-of-the-prime-minister-and-chancellors-meeting-with-the-obr>
- 43 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 289.
- 44 Interview, Charlie Bean.
- 45 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/august2022>.
<https://www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/inflation-fall-still-record-high?type=cpi-trackers>
- 46 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-62990423>
- 47 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/bulletins/publicsectorfinances/august2022>

8: MAINTAIN A REPUTATION FOR ECONOMIC COMPETENCE

- 1 <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/former-nisecretary-slams-his-own-partysmini-budget-citing-huge-tax-cut-for-the-very-rich/42012998.html>
- 2 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/02/michael-gove-says-liz-trusss-tax-cut-plans-not-conservative>

- 3 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63110541>
- 4 Interview, Michael Gove.
- 5 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, pp. 291–2.
- 6 Ibid., p. 292.
- 7 <https://www.theguardian.com/global/2022/oct/03/night-of-the-hurried-u-turn-how-truss-and-kwarteng-dumped-their-tax-cut>
- 8 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cabinet-split-over-mad-real-terms-cuts-to-benefits-mtspvcqfm>
- 9 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/03/tory-mps-plot-to-avert-welfare-squeeze-after-u-turn-on-top-rate-of-tax-kwasi-kwarteng>
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 <https://conservativehome.com/2022/10/03/we-will-get-britain-moving-kwartengs-conference-speech-full-text>
- 12 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/03/tory-mps-plot-to-avert-welfare-squeeze-after-u-turn-on-top-rate-of-tax-kwasi-kwarteng>
- 13 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0d49mkt>
- 14 Interview, Jake Berry.
- 15 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/conservatives/2022/10/conservative-party-conference-2022-birmingham-fear-loathing>
- 16 <https://www.ft.com/content/8dd2b237-c47e-489d-aeae-639aaf6eb6c8>
- 17 <https://unherd.com/2022/10/is-truss-the-worst-pm-in-history>
- 18 Seldon, *Major*, pp. 572–90.
- 19 Interview, Gavin Williamson.
- 20 Riley-Smith, *The Right to Rule*, p. 296.
- 21 <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/full-text-liz-truss-s-tory-conference-speech>
- 22 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/06/liz-truss-european-political-community-meeting-prague>
- 23 <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/blowing-the-budget>
- 24 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/liz-truss-lucy-bronze-olaf-scholz-leah-williamson-sarina-wiegman-b2199457.html>
- 25 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 26 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.

- 27 Correspondence with the author, Andrew Griffith, 28 April 2024.
- 28 <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/bank-england-buy-inflation-linked-uk-gilts-2022-10-11>
- 29 <https://www.ft.com/content/87a5b7bf-6786-427f-89d6-96b736dcb814>
- 30 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-10-12/debates/A4F24C85-AC0D-4BC0-BC23-EF09A009FD85/Engagements>
- 31 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/16/liz-truss-lost-authority-tory-party-prime-minister-conservative-mps-kwasikwarteng>
- 32 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/16/liz-truss-lost-authority-tory-party-prime-minister-conservative-mps-kwasikwarteng>
- 33 Interview, Robert Halfon.
- 34 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/12/liz-truss-infresh-peril-as-senior-tory-mps-round-on-her-over-economy>
- 35 Interview, Jason Stein.
- 36 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.

9: AVOID U-TURNS

- 1 Daniel Collings, email to author, 28 April 2024.
- 2 <https://www.ft.com/content/e021c208-3ede-11e7-9d56-25f963e998b2>
- 3 Interview, Simon McGee.
- 4 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 5 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 6 Interview, Cameron Brown.
- 7 Steve Swinford, email to author, 1 June 2024.
- 8 https://x.com/Steven_Swinford/status/1580S868S139692134400?lang=en
- 9 <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/c0c5c3c0-4bf6-11ed-8b55-aaf85c581598>
- 10 <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/kwasi-kwarteng-full-list-shortest-serving-chancellors-b1032831.html>
- 11 Interview, Sajid Javid.
- 12 Interview, Liz Truss.

- 13 Interview, Nick Macpherson.
- 14 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 15 Interview, Adam Smith.
- 16 Interview, Rupert Harrison.
- 17 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-press-conference-opening-remarks-14-october-2022>
- 18 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZv9CYhppdY>
- 19 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, pp. 30–3.
- 20 Interview, George Osborne.
- 21 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdpcveGSSQ0>
- 22 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-statement-17-october>
- 23 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-63278821>
- 24 Interview, Adam Smith.
- 25 Interview, Gavin Williamson.
- 26 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-10-17/debates/54BB3823-B8E9-405D-B055-F64DC6ACE626/ReplacementOfTheChancellorOfTheExchequer>
- 27 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.
- 28 <https://www.ft.com/content/38b30b44-94c2-4775-8efb-2c95b3e8c447>

10: RETAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTY

- 1 Alan Clark, *The Alan Clark Diaries: Thatcher's Fall*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1993, p. 30.
- 2 <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/>
- 3 Interview, Simon McGee.
- 4 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-the-papers-63294249>
- 5 <https://www.mailplus.co.uk/edition/comment/230362/if-pm-is-a-lame-duck-wise-tories-must-act>
- 6 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/18/dismayed-tory-mps-continue-to-plot-to-oust-liz-truss-from-no-10>
- 7 Interview, Graham Brady.
- 8 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 304.

- 9 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/26/sir-john-hayes-in-lockstep-with-suella-braverman-on-immigration>.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/19/suella-braverman-departs-as-uk-home-secretary-liz-truss>. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63456984>. <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/suella-braverman-sent-official-documents-email-six-times>.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-hasc-from-home-secretary/letter-to-hasc-from-home-secretary-accessible-version>.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/31/suella-braverman-email-four-questions-left-unanswered>
- 10 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63320750>
- 11 Interview, George Osborne.
- 12 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/19/liz-truss-adviser-jason-stein-suspended-sajid-javid>
- 13 <https://www.ft.com/content/48d802dc-388f-4889-b5e8-08cc16f0db87>
- 14 <https://www.ft.com/content/52f0d575-e17d-4957-9f75-f363d4f3e30c>
- 15 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-10-19/debates/C20633EF-DAB3-4D6A-903E-11FEDD4644D8/Engagements>
- 16 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/10/19/liz-truss-has-go-tory-party-have-chance-recovering>
- 17 *Get Brexit Done: The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto*, Conservative Party, London, 2019, p. 55.
- 18 Interview, Sophie Jarvis.
- 19 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-10-19/debates/C20633EF-DAB3-4D6A-903E-11FEDD4644D8/Engagements>
- 20 Interview, David Canzini.
- 21 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-10-19/debates/2C2C933D-682E-439B-AA46-096A9459F716/details>
- 22 Interview, Wendy Morton.
- 23 Interview, Penny Mordaunt.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/investigation-report-for-19-october-2022.pdf>

- 26 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-10-19/debates/C20633EF-DAB3-4D6A-903E-11FEDD4644D8/Engagements>
- 27 Interview, Craig Whittaker.
- 28 Interview, Iain Carter.
- 29 Interview, Graham Brady.
- 30 Interview, Jake Berry.
- 31 Cole and Heale, *Out of the Blue*, p. 309.
- 32 Interview, Liz Truss.
- 33 Interview, Mark Fullbrook.
- 34 Interview, Graham Brady.
- 35 Interview, Sophie Jarvis.
- 36 Interview, Jeremy Hunt.
- 37 Private information.
- 38 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-minister-liztruss-statement-in-downing-street-20-october-2022>
- 39 Interview, David Canzini.
- 40 Interview, Jake Berry.
- 41 Interview, Kwasi Kwarteng.

THE VERDICT: 'DEEP STATE' OR DEEP INCOMPETENCE?

- 1 Liz Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 271.
- 2 In her memoir, Truss wrote that 'The arguments Kwasi and I were making were not novel or eccentric. They'd been proved right by the experiences of the 1970s and 1980s, and for a time, they were accepted wisdom. But somehow the economic establishment had either forgotten or repudiated them in the years since.' Truss, *Ten Years to Save the West*, p. 233.
- 3 Robert Peston and Steph McGovern, 'Who Killed Liz Truss?', Rest is Money Podcast, April 2024.
- 4 Correspondence with the author, Robert Peston, 20 June 2024.
- 5 Adapted from F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Penguin, London, 2000, p. 170.

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

Dramatis Personae: *Truss and Boris Johnson* (Toby Melville/ Contributor/Getty)

Preface: *Truss in Estonia* (Simon Dawson/No. 10 Downing Street)

Introduction: *Truss campaigning* (PA Images/Alamy)

- 1 Secure the Power Base: *Truss and Hugh O’Leary* (Pool/Getty)
- 2 Have a Clear and Realistic Plan for Government: *Truss arriving at 10 Downing Street* (Imago/Alamy)
- 3 Appoint the Best Cabinet/Team: *Truss and her Cabinet* (Frank Augstein/Contributor/Getty)
- 4 Command the Big Events: *Truss at the state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II* (WPA Pool/Pool/Getty)
- 5 Be Credible and Highly Regarded Abroad: *Truss addresses the United Nations General Assembly* (Angela Weiss/Contributor/Getty)
- 6 Learn How to Be Prime Minister: *Truss in the House of Commons* (House of Commons)
- 7 Avoid Major Policy Failures: *Kwasi Kwarteng* (House of Commons)
- 8 Maintain a Reputation for Economic Competence: *Truss at a press conference* (Bloomberg/Contributor/Getty)
- 9 Avoid U-turns: *Jeremy Hunt* (House of Commons)
- 10 Retain the Confidence of the Party: *Truss at PMQs* (House of Commons) *The Verdict: Truss and Rishi Sunak* (Jonathan Hordle/ITV/Shutterstock)

INDEX

- ‘abacus economics’, 73, 83
- Accession Council, 142
- Adam Smith Institute, 67
- Adams, Nigel, 318
- Admiralty House, London, 122, 124, 129
- Afghanistan, 61, 64, 150, 210
- After the Coalition* (Kwarteng et al.), 55
- Agnew, Theodore, 115
- Ahmed, Rima, 213
- ‘aid for trade’, 151
- American Revolutionary War (1775–83), 119
- Andrew, Duke of York, 22–3
- ‘anti-growth coalition’, 68, 232
- Argar, Edward, 276
- Armstrong, William, 299
- Asquith, Herbert Henry, 9, 119, 146
- assassination attempts, 10–11
- Atlanticism, 64, 158–61, 164, 231, 325–6
- Attlee, Clement, 50, 93–4, 119, 172, 178, 179
- AUKUS Pact (2021), 75, 150
- austerity programme (2010–19), 245
- Australia, 5, 61, 75, 78, 150, 164
- Autumn Statement (2022), 275, 277, 293, 302

- Badenoch, Kemi, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33, 34, 39, 40, 99, 103, 176, 230
- Bailey, Andrew, 82, 113, 196, 204, 211, 241–2, 253, 276, 283
- Baldwin, Stanley, 4, 11, 91, 146, 178, 179, 266
- Balfour, Arthur, 173
- Bali, Indonesia, 20–22, 34, 69, 164
- Balls, Katy, 108
- Balmoral Castle, Aberdeenshire, 124–6, 133–4, 141
- Bamford, Anthony, Baron, 41
- bank holidays, 217
- Bank of England, 2, 14, 54, 68, 82, 84, 113, 116, 188, 190
 - Mini-Budget and, 196–7, 201, 203–12, 215, 217, 229, 235, 237, 241–3, 253, 276, 283–4, 328
- bankers’ bonuses, 80, 88, 193, 199, 202, 224

Barclay, Steve, 40, 101, 124
 Barker, Kate, 283
 Barrow, Tim, 21, 62
 Barton, Philip, 62
 Barwell, Gavin, 103, 110
 Bath, William Pulteney, 1st Earl, 5
 Bean, Charlie, 215
 Bennett, Asa, 319
 Berry, Jake, 29, 34, 99, 143, 223, 229, 259, 278, 294, 310, 313, 317, 320
 Bevan, Aneurin, 93
 Bevin, Ernest, 93
 Bew, John, 107
 Biden, Joseph, 54, 64, 129, 136, 148, 159–61, 281, 326
 Billett, Simon, 108
 von Bismarck, Otto, 50
 Black Wednesday (1992), 187
 Blair, Tony, 2, 50, 51, 53–4, 104, 110
 Bank of England independence (1997), 2, 53–4
 character traits, 168, 170, 172, 175, 179, 180
 Clause IV amendment (1995), 53
 foreign policy, 149–50, 157, 162
 Iraq invasion (2003), 92, 179, 187
 tuition fees U-turn (1998), 259
 United States, relations with, 64, 158
 Blinken, Antony, 160
 ‘blob’, 68, 81, 113, 190, 196, 215, 232, 283
 Bloomberg, 273, 282
 Blunt, Crispin, 278
 bond market, 14–15, 81, 83, 122, 192, 203, 207, 209–12, 217, 235, 241–3, 272, 282, 328
 Bowler, James, 107, 111, 240, 244, 251–3, 275, 276, 277
 Boyd, Alex, 84, 245–6
 Brady, Graham, 7, 24, 35, 45, 227, 264
 Truss’ resignation, 290, 292–3, 310, 312–14, 317, 321
 Braverman, Suella, 176
 conference (2022), 221, 230
 Home Secretary appointment, 32, 79, 96–7, 103, 105
 immigration, views on, 105, 106, 295–7
 leadership election, 25, 27, 28–9, 32, 33
 sacking as Home Secretary, 295–7
 Truss’ resignation, 294
 Brazil, 162
 brevity in post, xiii, 3–15, 128, 164
 Brexit, 2–3, 14, 21, 25, 29, 32, 34, 47, 64, 66, 156–7, 175, 201, 232, 254
 Chequers summit (2018), 101

Johnson and, 2–3, 21, 71, 78, 127, 156–7, 173
 Leave campaign, 66, 67, 157, 278
 May and, 101, 112, 155, 187, 259, 327
 Northern Ireland and, 61, 155–6, 159–60, 326
 referendum (2016), 23, 49, 52, 56–7, 104, 157
 Remain campaign, 23, 49, 52, 56–7, 104, 175
 resignation speech and, 319
 Singapore-on-Thames vision, 66–7, 319
 trade deals, 60–61
 Bridgen, Andrew, 278
Britannia Unchained (Kwarteng et al.), 55
 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 204–7, 213, 216, 220, 222–3, 274, 275
 British International Investment, 158
 British–Irish Council, 164
 Brown, Cameron, 193, 225, 261
 Brown, Gordon, 2, 8, 54, 78, 110, 111, 113, 162, 172, 173, 180, 240
 Brummer, Alex, 201
 Buckingham Palace, London, 142
 Buckland, Robert, 41, 101
 Budget Responsibility Committee, 214
 ‘Building the Network of Liberty’ (Truss), 63
 Burke, Edmund, 7
 Burns, Conor, 318
 Bush, George Herbert Walker, 54, 64
 Bush, George Walker, 64
 Bush, Stephen, 300
 Butler, Richard Austen, 176

 Cabinet, xv, 91–117, 325
 Cabinet Office, 31, 74, 85, 93, 96, 108, 134, 135, 210, 229, 242, 244, 249, 328
 Cabinet Room, Downing Street, 107, 128, 136, 145, 235, 252, 314, 319
 Cable & Wireless, 54
 Callaghan, James, 50, 94, 120, 150, 170
 Cameron, David, 2, 3, 19, 44, 49, 51, 91, 104, 106, 111, 112, 188, 240, 272
 character traits, 168, 170, 172, 180, 182
 education, 54
 EU membership referendum (2016), 187
 foreign policy, 149, 151, 158
 general election (2015), 51
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 33
 Mini-Budget (2022), 230
 Osborne, relationship with, 176
 resignation as PM (2016), 3, 187
 Truss, relationship with, 56

Camilla, Queen consort, 142
 Campbell-Bannerman, Henry, 9
 Canada, 5, 164
 Canning, George, 10
 Canzini, David, 109, 290, 304, 320
Captured Economy, The (Lindsey and Teles), 59
 Carlisle, Mark, 94
 Carlton Club, London, 310
 Carney, Mark, 196
 Carnwath, Alison, 285
 Carter, Iain, 225, 310
 Case, Simon, 110, 125, 128, 176
 Cabinet formation, 96, 104, 107
 Elizabeth II's death, 129, 134–8
 energy crisis, 121
 Hunt's appointment, 278, 280
 Kwarteng's sacking, 265
 Mini-Budget, 203, 204, 208, 211, 229, 244, 250, 253
 Morton's resignation, 310
 Scholar's sacking, 110, 116, 239
 Stein's suspension, 299, 300
 transition team meetings, 73–4, 84–5
 Truss' accession, 125, 128
 Truss' resignation, 312
 Cash, Bill, 23
 Catsaras, Nick, 20, 62, 107, 108, 125, 127, 136, 137, 158, 172
 Hunt's appointment, 280
 Kwarteng's sacking, 260–61
 Mini-Budget, 204, 224, 251, 253–5
 Morton's resignation, 309
 Stein's suspension, 299–300
 Truss' resignation, 311, 312, 315, 317
 Cavendish, Camilla, 230
 Centre for Policy Studies, xiv
 Chamberlain, Neville, 11–12, 55, 91, 120
 character traits, 11, 54, 167–84
 Charles III, King, 137, 138, 140, 142, 304, 306
 Chatham House, 63
 Chequers, Buckinghamshire, 12, 101, 236, 239–40, 277–80, 290, 291
 Chevening House, Kent, 74–86, 95, 96, 112, 191, 192, 194, 199, 236, 282
 Chief Whip, 97–8, 303
 child benefit, 247
 China, 32, 37, 53, 61, 63, 150, 151, 154–5, 157, 164, 267
 Chishti, Rehman, 25

Churchill, Winston, 2–3, 7, 12, 50, 91, 119, 120, 133, 146, 149, 168, 171, 178, 183
 City of London, 14, 189
 civil service, 2, 42, 62, 68, 73–4, 81, 85, 113, 175–6, 190, 215, 232
 Scholar, sacking of (2022), 14, 58, 74, 75, 110–16, 175, 194–5, 206, 215, 217, 239, 243, 328
 Clark, Alan, 288
 Clark, Greg, 101
 Clarke, Kenneth, 37, 230, 276
 Clarke, Simon, 68, 105, 180, 189
 Elizabeth II's death, 144
 Kwarteng's sacking, 267
 leadership election, 20, 24, 46
 Levelling Up appointment, 96
 Mini-Budget, 191, 198, 293
 transition team meetings, 72, 77, 80, 83
 Truss' resignation, 293
 Cleverly, James, 24, 99, 157, 176, 293, 297
 Clinton, Bill, 53, 64
 Coffey, Thérèse, 90, 102, 103, 105, 124, 175
 Chief Whip proposal, 97, 303
 DPM appointment, 71, 97, 175
 Free Enterprise Group (2011–22), 55
 Health Secretary appointment, 100, 128
 Kwarteng's sacking, 262
 leadership election, 21, 23, 24, 39
 Mini-Budget, 158, 248, 250, 293
 phone masts furore, 234
 Truss, relationship with, 23, 55, 71, 97, 176, 181, 293
 Truss' resignation, 293, 313
 Cole, Harry, 225–6, 228, 274
 Commonwealth, 5, 120, 160
 Commonwealth Development Corporation, 158
 Conservative Party conference (2022), 219–32
 European Research Group, 29, 38, 291, 300–301
 leadership election (1990), 288
 leadership election (2019), 26, 35, 60
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), *xviii*, 19–47, 69–86, 100, 154, 177, 316, 320
 leadership election (Oct 2022), 310–11, 316–18, 321
 1922 Committee, *see* 1922 Committee
 One Nation Group, 78, 223, 291
 Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAP), 14
 ConservativeHome, 25, 40, 60, 109
 Cookson, Anna, 213
 COP15 (2022), 164
 Corn Laws repeal (1846), 287

corporation tax, 34, 76, 79, 81, 88, 189, 192, 199, 247, 251, 259–60
cost of living crisis (2021–), 47, 76, 84–6, 106, 115, 120–24, 128, 130, 190, 210
Covid-19 pandemic (2019–23), 76, 113, 115, 123, 127, 133, 154, 196, 202, 266
Crace, John, 28
Cramer, Richard Ben, 54
Cranborne, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Viscount, 231
Crimea, 154
Crosby, Lynton, 38
Cummings, Dominic, 14, 26, 61, 71, 74, 96, 173
Cunliffe, Jon, 197
Curtice, John, 329

Daily Express, 39–40, 201, 278, 292
Daily Mail, 13, 31, 39, 40, 57, 201, 228, 292
Daily Star, 4
Daily Telegraph, 39, 58, 113, 201, 274, 302
Dalton, Hugh, 93
Darroch, Kim, 161
data team, 108
Davidson, Lynn, 261
Daylesford House, Gloucestershire, 41
Debt Management Office, 242
debt, 76, 123, 195, 200, 211, 216, 236, 242, 243, 247, 248, 255, 325
decisiveness, 173
‘deep state’, 13–15, 68, 81, 82, 190, 196, 215, 318, 323, 328
delegation, 182
Deliveroo, 58, 124
Delivery Unit, 108
Dell, Edmund, 123
Deng Xiaoping, 53
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 85, 95, 96, 132, 239
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 56, 60
Department for International Trade, 31, 59, 60–61, 69, 84, 112, 239, 251
Department of Economic Affairs, 238
Departmental Priorities Letter (2022), 188
Diana, Princess of Wales, 138, 175
Disraeli, Benjamin, 4, 149, 178, 287–8
divide and rule, 180
dividend tax rates, 282
Dole, Bob, 54
Dorries, Nadine, 24, 29, 39, 44, 46, 67
Douglas-Home, Alec, 8
Dowden, Oliver, 40, 43, 100
Downing Street, London, 6, 98, 169

- Cabinet Room, 107, 128, 136, 145, 235, 252, 314, 319
- Pillared Room, 304, 313
- Terracotta Room, 223
- Thatcher Room, 250
- Duffy, Philip, 75
- Dukakis, Michael, 54
- Duncan Smith, Iain, 23, 27, 32, 37, 44, 97, 99, 154, 230

- Ebbsfleet, Kent, 200
- Economic Advisory Council, 282
- Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat, 244
- Economist, The*, 202
- Eden, Anthony, 12, 50, 91–2, 120, 164, 171, 174, 180
- Edward VII, King, 9, 146
- Edwards, Ruth, 305
- ego, 184
- Eisenhower, Dwight, 12
- elections, 8–9
 - 1906 general election, 9
 - 1924 general election, 13–14
 - 1964 general election, 8
 - 1979 general election, 37, 49, 51, 52
 - 1992 general election, 258
 - 1997 general election, 259
 - 2001 general election, 231
 - 2010 general election, 8, 19
 - 2015 general election, 51
 - 2017 general election, 19, 27, 30, 231
 - 2019 general election, 19, 22, 50–51, 78, 223, 289, 324
 - 2024 general election, 3, 34, 51, 105, 189, 193, 224, 323, 329
- Elizabeth II, Queen, 124–6
 - death, 1, 104, 118, 120, 133–46, 167, 177, 325
 - funeral, 118, 129, 140, 143, 145, 146, 158, 159, 160, 161, 176, 177
- Elliott, Matthew, 67, 68, 77, 83
- Ellis, Michael, 100, 103
- energy, 73, 79, 84–6, 87, 169
 - green levies, 79, 132, 189, 192
 - inflation crisis (2021–), *see* energy crisis
 - Norwegian gas supply plan (2022), 240
 - nuclear power, 73, 85, 132, 164
- Energy Bill Relief Scheme, 200
- energy crisis (2021–), 47, 76, 84–6, 106, 115, 120–24, 128, 130, 132–3
 - Norwegian gas supply plan (2022), 240
 - Price Guarantee, 86, 87, 106, 115, 121–4, 132–3, 143, 191, 200, 215, 216

Relief Scheme, 200
windfall tax proposals, 86, 121, 130, 131, 132
Energy Price Guarantee, 86, 87, 106, 115, 121–4, 132–3, 143, 191, 200, 215, 216
England football team, 237
Equinor, 240
Estonia, 63, 152
European Exchange Rate Mechanism, 187
European Political Community (EPC), 161, 233
European Research Group (ERG), 29, 38, 291, 300–301
European Union (EU), 49, 53, 112, 151, 152, 224, 288, 319
see also Brexit
Eustice, George, 40, 60, 101
Evans, Clare, 127, 129, 313
Evans, Lloyd, 131
Evening Standard, 40
events, command of, 1, 119, 146–7
Extinction Rebellion, 232

Fadden, Arthur, 5
Falklands War (1982), 7, 151
family base, 174
Farage, Nigel, 66
Farris, Laura, 102
Field, Mark, 174
Financial Conduct Authority, 196
Financial Policy Committee, 210, 217
Financial Services Authority, 196
Financial Times, 81, 86, 109, 121, 201, 230, 242, 300
Finkelstein, Daniel, 131
First World War (1914–18), 50, 119, 120
Fitzgerald, Francis Scott, 330
Foot, Michael, 53
football, 237
Ford, Vicky, 103
forecasting, 194
Foreign Office, 13, 20–22, 25, 29, 61–3, 69, 71, 84, 92, 150–56
Fox, Charles James, 7, 10
fracking, 132, 294, 302–8
France, 12, 30, 136, 160, 161, 164
Francis of Assisi, Saint, 51
Francois, Mark, 38, 131–2
Free Enterprise Group, 55
free-market economics, 15, 46, 49, 52, 53, 58, 64–8, 78, 81, 151, 293–4
Friedman, Milton, 66

Frost, David, 31, 71, 155, 302, 311
 FTSE 100, 202
 Fullbrook, Mark, xv, 177, 190
 Cabinet formation, 96, 97, 104, 107, 110, 128
 conference, 224, 225, 226
 Elizabeth II's death, 143
 Hunt's appointment, 270, 280
 Kwarteng's sacking, 261
 leadership election, 38, 39, 40, 44, 69, 70–71, 78, 124
 Mini-Budget, 248, 249, 250
 Scholar's sacking, 113
 Stein's suspension, 299
 Truss' resignation, 294, 312
 furlough scheme (2020–21), 133, 196

 G20, 20–22, 34, 69, 162, 164
 G7, 62, 162, 241
 Garfield, James, 4–5
 GCHQ, 152
 general elections, *see* elections
 generosity, 180
 George I, King, 6, 146
 George II, King, 6, 92
 George III, King, 6, 7, 119, 146
 George IV, King, 10, 11, 146
 Gephardt, Richard, 54
 Gilmour, Ian, 94
 Gladstone, William, 50, 119, 170, 178, 187
 Global Britain, 66
 global financial crisis (2008), 191, 254
 Goderich, Frederick John Robinson, 1st Viscount, 11
 Good Friday Agreement (1998), 159
 Goodlad, Alastair, 230
 Gove, Michael, 14, 26–7, 35, 40, 47, 56, 60, 100, 108, 325
 Mini-Budget (2022), 222–4, 228, 230
 government debt, 76, 123, 195, 200, 211, 216, 236, 242, 243, 247, 248, 255, 325
Great Gatsby, The (Fitzgerald), 330
 green policies, 67, 79, 87, 132, 189, 192
 Green, Damian, 228
 Greenwich, London, 22, 24, 72, 95, 112, 129
 Griffith, Andrew, 241, 318
 growth, xiii, xvi, 2, 3, 23, 30, 34, 49, 68, 106, 128, 130, 233–4
 ‘anti-growth coalition’, 68, 232
 conference and, 221, 232

Mini-Budget and, 188, 190, 199
Guardian, 81, 201, 229, 292
Guido Fawkes, 40

Hague, William, 7, 27, 32–3, 46, 73, 230
Halfon, Robert, 244
Hall, Macer, 278
Hammond, Philip, 58, 65, 111, 112, 123, 172, 183, 274, 276
Hands, Greg, 102, 309
Hands, Guy, 285
hard work, 171–2
harmony, 176
Harris, Ralph, xiv
Harrison, Rupert, 253, 272, 275, 282
Harrison, William Henry, 4–5
Hart, Gary, 54
Hart, Simon, 40, 101
Hayek, Friedrich, 66
Hayes, John, 295
Healey, Denis, 94
Healey, Sarah, 135, 141
Heappey, James, 294
Heath, Allister, 201
Heath, Edward ‘Ted’, 49, 50, 174, 258, 265, 299
Heseltine, Michael, 230, 288
Heywood, Jeremy, 107
Hill, Henry, 109
Hill, Peter, 126
Hinds, Damian, 102
Hinkley Point nuclear power station, 259
Hitler, Adolf, 12
Hollinrake, Kevin, 102
Home Office, 92
Hope, Jamie, 21, 42–3, 75, 86, 123, 124, 225, 244–5, 248
‘hopper’, 233
Horse Guards Parade, London, 122
Howard, Greville, Baron, 23
Howard, Michael, 33, 37, 73, 230
Howe, Geoffrey, 198
Hughes, Richard, 194, 214–15, 276
Hunt, Charlie, 269
Hunt, Jeremy, 27, 28, 35, 39, 60, 101, 162, 171, 176, 256, 264, 265, 266–85
 Autumn Statement, 275, 277, 293, 302
 Mini-Budget reversal, 271–85, 289–90, 291–2, 293, 325

- triple lock U-turn, 301
- Truss' resignation, 316–17
- Hunt, Lucia, 268–9, 271
- Hurd, Douglas, 230

- Ilott, Ollie, 108
- immigration, 66–7, 78, 105, 106, 162, 295–7
- 'impossible office', xvi
- inclusivity, 180
- income tax, 55, 72, 76, 88, 166, 192–3, 203, 221–9, 282
- Independent*, 31
- Independent Expert Panel (2023), 145
- India, 162
- inflation, 34, 66, 82, 83, 84, 86, 121, 190, 214
 - Mini-Budget and, 193, 195, 200–201, 205, 207, 210
- infrastructure projects, 244
- inheritance tax, 76
- Instagram, 59
- Institute for Fiscal Studies, 200
- Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), xiv, 49, 54, 66, 67
- Integrated Review (2021), 142–3, 158
- intelligence (information gathering), 152, 163
- intelligence (mental ability), 58, 172–3
- interest rates, 190, 193, 195, 196, 197, 207, 209, 214, 216, 235
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), 12, 14, 68, 209, 213, 215, 219, 235, 237, 241, 261, 272, 321, 328
- international relations, 63, 148–64, 325–6
- investment zones, 77, 87, 188, 199
- IR35 reforms, 199
- Iran, 61, 63
- Iraq, 64, 92, 179, 187
- Ireland, 164, 187
- Israel, 12, 150, 223–4
- Italy, 5
- ITV, 274
- Ivers, Charlotte, 230

- Jack, Alister, 41, 99
- Japan, 61
- Jarvis, Sophie, 21, 23, 43, 67, 102, 110, 124, 181, 225, 291, 303, 315
- Javid, Sajid, 20, 25, 39, 55, 60, 101, 261, 264–6, 270, 277, 298–9, 325
- Jayawardena, Ranil, 24, 46, 80, 99, 102
- Jenkins, Roy, 94, 123
- Jenrick, Robert, 100, 103
- Jessop, Julian, 72, 77, 81, 121, 193

Johnson, Boris, 2–3, 49, 60, 91, 106, 121, 167, 170, 184, 188, 288–9, 330
 betrayal thesis, 41–2, 46–7
 Brexit and, 2–3, 21, 71, 78, 127, 156–7, 173
 cakeism, 121
 character traits, 167, 170, 184
 China, relations with, 154
 conference (2022), 229
 Elizabeth II's death (2022), 141
 Foreign Secretary (2016–19), 150
 general election (2019), 19, 22, 50–51, 52, 78, 289, 324
 Hunt's Chancellor appointment (2022), 281
 leadership election (2019), 26, 35, 60
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 24–5, 31, 32, 36, 38, 39, 41–2, 46–7, 229
 Johnson, Boris, (*cont.*)
 leadership election (Oct 2022), 310–11, 317–18
 media, relations with, 220
 Mini-Budget (2022), 230
 Northern Ireland Protocol (2019), 155–6
 Operation Save Big Dog (2022), 290
 Partygate (2021–2), 321, 329
 principal private secretary, 125–6
 Privileges Committee (2023), 318
 prorogation of Parliament (2019), 126
 resignation (2022), 20–22, 39, 46, 112, 124, 127, 175, 265, 289, 292, 294, 310, 316, 321
 Sunak relationship with, 56, 123
 tax policies, 199
 Truss, relationship with, 41, 61, 62, 155–6, 167
 Truss' resignation (2022), 310, 317
 Ukraine War (2022–), 26, 127, 151–2, 154, 163, 173
 Johnson, Carrie, 41, 318
 Johnson, Daniel, 101
 Johnson, Paul, 200
 Jones, Adam, 57, 59, 63, 67, 150
 Cabinet formation, 102, 107, 108, 109
 Elizabeth II's death, 138
 energy crisis, 123
 leadership election, 21, 22, 42–3, 69, 80, 86
 Mini-Budget, 222, 225, 228, 250
 Truss' accession, 124, 127
 wedding, 273, 291
 Jones, Edward, 269
 Jones, George, 91
 Joseph, Keith, 94
 judgement, 182, 184, 327

Kavanagh, Trevor, 225
 Keegan, Gillian, 102
 Kempson, Ross, 278
 Kennedy, John Fitzgerald, 63
 Kerslake, Robert, Baron, 115
 Khrushchev, Nikita, 12
 Kiddell, Tim, 138
 King, Mervyn, 196
 Kuenssberg, Laura, 204–7, 216, 222, 275
 Kwarteng, Kwasi, 54, 55–6, 68, 105, 176, 186
 Bank of England, views on, 82
 Business Secretary (2021–2), 95, 239
 Chancellor appointment (2022), 24, 77, 95–6, 105
 conference (2022), 225–9
 energy crisis (2022), 121–3
 Free Enterprise Group (2011–22), 55
 IMF meeting (2022), 237, 252, 254, 261, 272, 321
 Kuenssberg interview (2022), 204–7, 216
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 24, 35, 39, 46, 77, 95–6
 Mini-Budget (2022), xvi, 171, 186, 191–217, 225–9, 235, 294, 323
 Norwegian gas supply plan (2022), 240
 OBR, views on, 82, 194–5
 sacking as Chancellor (2022), 171, 260–66, 272, 274, 329
 Scholar, sacking of (2022), 14, 74, 112, 113–16, 206, 328
 transition team meetings (2022), 73–4, 75, 80, 81–2, 85, 191, 192
 Treasury, views on, 238
 Truss, relationship with, 24, 46, 55, 77, 176, 180
 War and Gold (2014), 55
 Labour Party, 3, 53, 232
 Clause IV amendment (1995), 53
 Conservative leadership election (2022), 42
 energy crisis (2022), 86, 130
 fracking vote (2022), 303, 308
 free market economics and, 53
 Mini-Budget (2022), 201, 214
 polling, 278
 Zinoviev letter affair (1924), 13–14
 Lamont, Norman, 37, 276
 Lavrov, Sergey, 21, 62, 152
 Lawson, Nigel, 52, 94–5, 123, 198, 276
 LBC, 103
 leadership elections, *see under* Conservative Party
 leaks, 28, 31, 57, 77, 81, 104–5, 145, 156, 177

Mini-Budget crisis, 227, 250, 251, 253, 263, 273
Lee, Frank, 111
Legislative Affairs, 108
letters of last resort, 128
‘levelling up’, 34, 78, 96
Levido, Isaac, 22, 38
Lewis, Brandon, 28, 38–9, 97, 99, 259–60, 293
von der Leyen, Ursula, 62, 159
Liability Driven Investments (LDIs), 209, 210–11, 217, 241–2, 328
Liberal Democrats, 49, 52, 139, 232
libertarianism, 66–8, 315
Lilico, Andrew, 81
Lincoln, Robert, 5
Lindsey, Brink, 59
Little, Cat, 75, 116, 238
Littlewood, Mark, 49, 52, 59, 66, 68, 72, 77, 83, 86, 188
Liverpool, Robert Jenkinson, 2nd Earl, 10, 146
Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff, 145
Llewellyn, Ed, 110
Lloyd George, David, 50, 93, 119, 149, 178, 249
Lombardelli, Clare, 210, 211, 271–2, 276
Lord North Street, London, 23, 30, 42, 65
Ludlow, Sarah, 21, 23
Lyons, Gerard, 77, 81, 82, 193

MacDonald, Ramsay, 4, 13, 50, 157, 330
Macleod, Iain, 265
Macmillan, Harold, 50, 54, 111, 120, 157, 171, 179, 258
Macpherson, Nick, 111, 115, 270
‘macro then micro’, xv
Macron, Emmanuel, 136, 161, 164, 233
Mail on Sunday, 46
Maitlis, Emily, 23
Major, John, 33, 50, 51, 53, 64, 179, 187, 188, 230–31, 258, 288
Malthouse, Kit, 99
Mansion House, London, 64, 154
Marr, Andrew, 103
Martin, Iain, 112
Mason, Chris, 274
May, Philip, 174
May, Theresa, 2, 3, 19, 26, 28, 30, 33, 49, 51, 57, 91, 103, 110
 Brexit and, 101, 112, 155, 187, 259, 327
 Cabinet, 57, 101
 character traits, 173

- Elizabeth II's death (2022), 141
- general election (2017), 19, 27, 30, 231
- Hammond, relationship with, 123
- Hunt's Chancellor appointment (2022), 281
- international relations, 149
- leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 33
- resignation (2019), 60, 288, 292, 310
- Truss, relationship with, 57
- Truss' accession (2022), 131
- U-turns, 259
- McCallum, Ken, 297
- McDonald's, 53
- McGee, Simon, 109, 212, 228, 260, 291
- McSwaine, Celia, 262–3
- McTague, Tom, 66
- McTernan, Madelaine, 85
- McVey, Esther, 228
- media, 201, 204–7, 213, 216, 220, 225, 227, 228, 273–5
- Medium-Term Fiscal Plan, 79, 200, 208, 214, 247, 248, 282
- Memon, Adam, 242–6, 248, 249, 250
- Menzies, Robert, 5
- Merali, Shabbir, 55, 59, 72, 234, 242–6, 248, 249, 250, 252
- Meyer, Christopher, 158
- MI5, 297
- MI6, 152
- Middleton, Peter, 111
- Millbank Tower, London, 42
- Mini-Budget (2022), xvi, 14, 83, 88, 106, 116, 143–5, 158, 176, 186, 189–217
- Mini-Budget (2022), (*cont.*)
 - Bank of England and, 196–7, 201, 203–12, 215, 217, 229, 235, 237, 241–4, 253, 276, 283–4, 328
 - bankers' bonuses, 80, 88, 193, 199, 202, 224
 - BBC radio interviews, 213
 - bond market and, 14–15, 81, 83, 122, 192, 203, 207, 209–12, 217, 235, 241–3, 272, 282
 - budgetary black hole, 234–8
 - character traits and, 179–80, 183
 - Chequers summit, 236–8, 290, 291
 - communications and, 204–7, 212–13
 - conference and, 219–32
 - corporation tax and, 34, 79, 81, 88, 189, 192, 199, 247, 251, 259–60
 - 'deep state' and, 14–15, 190, 318, 323, 328
 - East Asian markets and, 206–7, 254–5, 271, 277
 - Elizabeth II's death and, 143–5, 197
 - green levies and, 79, 132, 189, 192
 - Hunt's reversal, 271–85, 289–90, 291–2, 293

income tax and, 88, 166, 192–3, 203, 221–9, 282
 inflation and, 193, 195, 200–201, 205, 207, 210, 214
 interest rates and, 193, 195, 196, 197, 207, 209, 214, 216, 235
 international relations and, 161, 164
 Kuenssberg interview, 204–7, 216
 Kwarteng's sacking, 171, 260–66, 272, 274, 329
 media reception, 201, 213
 Medium-Term Fiscal Plan, 205, 208, 214, 247, 248
 National Insurance and, 79–80, 81, 189, 192, 199, 279
 OBR and, 194–7, 204, 206, 208, 214, 217, 234–8, 276, 329
 pound sterling and, 202, 208, 214, 233, 235, 282
 spending and, 191–2, 200, 205, 208, 229, 236, 243–54
 stamp duty, 199, 203
 timing of, 197–8
 Treasury and, 194, 203, 204, 206, 207–12, 217, 229, 235, 237, 242
 Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), 197, 204, 207, 216, 283, 328
 Montréal, Quebec, 164
 Moore, Charles, 65
 moral seriousness, 176–7
 Mordaunt, Penny
 Cabinet formation, 102, 103, 105
 Elizabeth II's death, 142
 fracking vote, 306–7
 leadership election, 25, 27, 28, 31–2, 33, 34–6, 39, 71, 81, 98–9, 320
 Mini-Budget, 230, 284, 290
 Morgan, Sally, 110
 Morrison, Herbert, 93
 mortgages, 189, 209, 217, 329
 Morton, Wendy, 97, 103, 145, 175, 250, 303–10
 Moscow, Russia, 152
 Moynihan, Jon, 23, 67, 68, 77, 82, 329
 Munich Crisis (1938), 91
 Murty, Akshata, 44

 National Health Service (NHS), 75, 94, 128, 245, 247
 National Institute of Economic and Social Research, 216
 National Insurance, 23, 34, 76, 79–80, 81, 189, 192, 199, 213, 279
 NATO, 30, 158, 159
 Net Zero, 100, 132
 Netanyahu, Benjamin, 223–4
 Netflix, 281
New Statesman, xv, 230
 New Zealand, 61
 Newton, Tony, 231

Newton, Victoria, 225
 nimbyism, 234
 1922 Committee, 7, 24, 35, 124, 178, 227, 243–4, 265
 Truss' resignation, 290, 292–3, 302, 310, 312–14, 321
 Noonan, Peggy, 65
 North, Frederick, 6, 7, 23, 92, 119
 Northern Ireland, 61, 155–6, 158, 159– 60, 164, 326
 Northern Research Group, 34
 Norway, 86, 240, 319
 nuance, 183–4
 nuclear power, 73, 85, 132, 164
 nuclear submarines, 73, 128

 O'Grady, Sean, 31
 O'Leary, Frances, 124, 281, 314–15
 O'Leary, Hugh, 18, 21, 48, 124, 129, 174, 279, 311, 312, 314–15
 O'Leary, Liberty, 124, 281, 314–15
Observer, 244
 Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), 14, 34, 68, 82, 88, 123, 190
 immigration, views on, 295
 Mini-Budget and, 194–7, 204, 206, 208, 214, 217, 234–8, 276, 329
 Ofgem, 85
 One Nation, 78, 223, 291
 Operation London Bridge, 129, 134, 135, 136–8
 Operation Save Big Dog (2022), 290
 Opinium, 37, 278
 optimism, 168–9
 Osborne, George, 44, 82, 159, 176, 194, 245, 272, 276, 281, 297
 Owen, Charlotte, 107, 305
 Owen, David, 13

 Palmerston, Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount, 149, 178, 270
 paranoia, 179, 190, 219–20
 Parker, George, 86
 Partygate (2021–2), 321, 329
 Patel, Priti, 41
 Paterson, Owen, 321
 Peel, Robert, 4, 6, 50, 219, 287–8, 330
 Pelham, Henry, 92
 pensions, 14, 75, 192, 203, 210, 247, 301
 Perceval, Spencer, 11
 Percy, Andrew, 295
 Peston, Robert, 14, 274, 275, 328
 Philp, Chris, 77, 80, 83, 99, 121–2, 180, 191–2, 254, 267, 275

phone masts, 234
 Pillared Room, Downing Street, 304, 313
 Pimlott, Ben, 51
 Pincher, Chris, 321
 Pitt, William the Elder, 9, 270
 Pitt, William the Younger, 6–7, 50, 93, 119, 149
 planning permission 87
 Policy Unit, 109, 315
 political savvy, 174–5
 poll tax (1989–90), 92, 187, 258, 288
 Porter, Ruth, 67, 71, 181
 Cabinet formation, 102, 107, 110
 energy crisis, 123
 Hunt’s appointment, 269, 280
 Kwarteng’s sacking, 263, 266
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 22, 38, 69, 70
 Mini-Budget, 224, 235, 250, 252
 transition team meetings, 72, 95
 Truss’ resignation, 311, 315, 319
 Portland Communications, 23
 pound sterling, 81, 82, 202, 208, 214, 231, 233, 235, 282
 Powell, Jonathan, 110
 Prentis, Victoria, 103
 Prime Minister’s Questions, 130–31, 172, 243, 286, 298, 299, 301–2, 304
 Principal Private Secretary, 125–6
 prisons, 293
 Private Office, 108, 109, 111, 139, 169, 170, 172, 271, 315
 Privileges Committee, 318
 public speaking, 178
 Putin, Vladimir, 130, 151, 152, 153, 162
 PwC, 190

al-Qaeda, 210
 Qatar, 86
 Queen Elizabeth II Centre, London, 122

Raab, Dominic, 40, 61, 100–101, 150, 180
 Rachman, Gideon, 121
 Radakin, Tony, 250
 Radio Four, 220, 275
 RAF Northolt, London, 124, 125, 127, 157
 rail strikes, 291
 Rayner, Angela, 136
 Reagan, Ronald, 53, 64, 65, 150, 159, 184, 202, 231, 323

Red Square, Moscow, 152
'Red Wall', 34
Redwood, John, 23, 38, 67, 68, 77, 254, 267
Rees-Mogg, Jacob, 24, 25, 29, 39, 46, 67–8, 90, 105, 293–4
 Business, Energy and Industrial Secretary, 96, 132, 293–4, 302
 chancellorship ambitions, 72, 95, 294
 fracking plans, 294, 302–3, 305
 Kwarteng's sacking, 267
 Mini-Budget, 191, 293–4
 transition team meetings, 72, 73, 76–7, 83, 88, 95
 Truss' resignation, 293–4
Reeves, Rachel, 82, 201
Reform, 55
Reform Act (1832), 287
regulation, 53, 55, 66, 87, 188
Resolution Foundation, 235
Reynolds, Martin, 126
Rifkind, Malcolm, 37
Riley-Smith, Ben, 228, 274
Robbins, Olly, 112
Rockingham, Charles Watson-Wentworth, 2nd Marquess, 10
Romeo, Antonia, 60, 112, 239, 240
Rose, Stuart, 285
Rosebery, Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl, 50, 171, 173
Royal Dutch Shell, 54
Rudd, Amber, 60
Russell, Beth, 75, 116, 238
Russian Federation, 21, 27, 30, 62, 63, 64, 76, 127, 150–54
 intelligence gathering, 72, 174
 Ukraine War *see* Ukraine War Rwanda, 296
Salisbury, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess, 4, 157, 178
Sandbrook, Dominic, 230
Scholar, Michael, 114
Scholar, Tom, 14, 58, 74, 75, 110–16, 175, 194–5, 206, 215, 217, 219, 239, 243, 328
Scholtz, Olaf, 136
Scottish National Party (SNP), 232
Second World War (1939–45), 50, 93, 119, 120, 151, 168, 183, 253
'secure the citadel', xv, 324
Segal-Knowles, Anthony, 112
'seize the big moments' xvi, 175, 325
Seldon, Arthur, xiv, 53
September 11
 attacks (2001), 210
 shale gas, 132, 294, 302–8

Shapps, Grant, 25, 40, 222, 223, 230, 250, 297, 325
Sharma, Alok, 41, 267
Shipman, Tim, 228
Sinclair, Matt, 67, 70, 72, 77, 81, 83, 110, 225, 235, 242, 250, 252
Singapore-on-Thames, 66–7, 319
Skidmore, Chris, 41, 100
Skipton Building Society, 209
Smith, Adam, 271, 282
Smith, Chloe, 181, 221
Smith, David, 329
Smith, Dougie, 14
Smith, Julian, 33, 35, 100, 222
Soames, Christopher, 94
Solomon, Reuben, 23
South Africa, 162
Soviet Union (1922–91), 12, 53, 63
Spectator, xiv, 108, 131
Spencer, Mark, 103
spending, 59–60, 64, 80, 83, 188, 191, 200, 229, 236, 243–54
St James's Palace, London, 142
St Paul's Cathedral, London, 142
stamp duty, 199, 203
Starmer, Keir, 3, 130–31, 136, 214, 243, 301–2
steady temperament, 179
Stein, Jason, 70–72, 175
 Cabinet formation, 97, 109
 Hunt appointment, 266, 272
 Javid, relationship with, 298–300
 Kwarteng's sacking, 263
 leadership election, 22–3, 32, 44
 Mini-Budget, 225, 228, 231, 250, 252
 suspension, 299–300
 Truss' resignation, 279, 280
Stephenson, Paul, 278
Stheeman, Robert, 242
storytelling, 178
Stride, Mel, 195, 229, 230, 275
Stuart, Graham, 305
Sturgeon, Nicola, 136
Suez Crisis (1956), 12, 92
Sun, 225, 227, 274
Sunak, Rishi
 chancellorship (2020–22), 20, 23, 56, 60, 76, 112, 123, 195, 199
 character traits, 173, 174

China, relations with, 154
 conference (2022), 229
 ‘deep state’ theories and, 14, 215, 322
 Johnson, relationship with, 56, 123
 Johnson’s resignation (2022), 20, 46
 Kwarteng’s sacking (2022), 265, 267, 289
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 19, 25, 27, 28, 30–47, 73, 84, 100, 154, 177, 320, 322
 leadership election (Oct 2022), 310, 318, 321
 Mini-Budget (2022), 14, 215, 230, 289, 291
 premiership (2022–24), 34, 102, 128, 173
 resignation as Chancellor (2022), 20
 Thatcher, influence of, 37, 66, 179
 Truss, relationship with, 14, 27, 28, 52, 100, 167
 Truss’ resignation (2022), 294, 297, 310
 Windsor Framework (2023), 61, 159, 326
Sunday Express, 40
Sunday Telegraph, 39, 40, 156
Sunday Times, 298
 supply-side reforms, 65, 87, 88, 144, 188, 248
 Swinford, Steve, 262–3, 264
 Symonds, Carrie, *see* Johnson, Carrie

 Taiwan, 150, 157
 Taliban, 210
 Tambroni, Fernando, 5
 taxation, 23, 30, 34, 46, 47, 59, 60, 64, 87, 128, 130, 188–217
 corporation tax, 34, 76, 79, 81, 88, 189, 192, 199, 247, 251, 259–60
 dividend tax rates, 282
 flat rate policy, 72–3
 green levies, 79, 132, 189, 192
 income tax, 55, 72, 76, 88, 166, 192, 203, 221–9, 282
 Mini-Budget (2022), 188–217
 National Insurance, 23, 34, 76, 79–80, 81, 189, 192, 199, 279
 stamp duty, 199, 203
 transition team meetings, 72–3, 76, 79–83, 88, 192
 value-added tax (VAT), 199, 282
 TaxPayers’ Alliance, 67
 Tebbit, Norman, 94
 Teles, Steven, 59
Ten Years to Save the West (Truss), 14, 155
 Terracotta Room, Downing Street, 223
 Thatcher Room, Downing Street, 250
 Thatcher, Denis, 174, 311
 Thatcher, Margaret, xiv, 3, 7, 15, 37, 49–52, 54, 64–6, 179, 188, 201, 257–8, 288, 323

- budgets, 80, 198
- Cabinet, 94, 101, 157, 258
- character traits, 65, 172, 178, 183
- EU, views on, 288
- events, command of, 119
- Falklands War (1982), 7, 151
- general election (1979), 37, 49, 51, 52
- iconography of, *xvii*, 15, 31, 37, 63, 179, 222, 231
- ‘Lady’s not for turning’ speech (1980), 222, 258, 284–5
- leadership election (1990), 288
- Thatcher, Margaret, (*cont.*)
 - meetings, behaviour at, 65, 183
 - poll tax (1989–90), 92, 187, 258, 288
 - Reagan, relationship with, 53, 64, 150, 231
- Thorneycroft, Peter, 266
- Times, The*, 40, 115, 131, 214, 262, 265
- Today*, 220, 274
- Togo, 315
- Treasury, 14, 27, 57–9, 68, 73, 74, 75, 82, 83, 108–9, 190, 194, 238–40
 - growth department plan, 238–40
 - Mini-Budget (2022), 194, 203, 204, 206, 207–12, 217, 229, 235, 237, 242
 - Scholar, sacking of (2022), 14, 58, 74, 75, 110–16, 175, 194–5, 215, 217, 239, 243, 328
- Trevelyan, Anne-Marie, 31, 39, 99, 294
- triple lock, 75, 247, 301
- Truman, Harry, 174
- Trump, Donald, 150, 154, 224
- Truss, Elizabeth ‘Liz’, *xvii*, *xviii*, 18, 48, 90, 118, 148, 166, 218, 256, 286, 322
 - Atlanticism, 64, 158–61, 164, 231, 325–6
 - autodidacticism, 54, 173
 - Bank of England, views on, 2, 14, 54, 68, 82, 113, 188, 190, 196
 - brevity in post, *xiii*, 3–15, 128, 164
 - Brexit, views on, *see* Brexit
 - Cabinet formation (2022), 91–110, 325
 - character traits, 11, 54, 58, 167–84
 - Chevening House meetings (2022), 74–86, 95, 96, 112, 191, 192, 194, 199, 236, 282
 - Chief Secretary to the Treasury (2017–19), 57–9
 - Churchill, influence of, 2–3, 151, 183
 - civil service, views on, 42, 62, 68, 81, 85, 113, 175–6, 190, 215, 219, 232
 - ‘deep state’, views on, 13–15, 68, 81, 82, 190, 196, 318, 323, 328
 - Education under-secretary (2012–14), 26–7, 56, 223
 - Elizabeth II’s death (2022), 133–46, 158, 167, 176, 177
 - energy crisis (2022), 84–6, 106, 115, 120–24, 130, 131–3, 143, 191, 215
 - Environment Secretary (2014–16), 56
 - Foreign Secretary (2021–2), 20–22, 25, 29, 61–3, 69, 84, 112, 150–56, 326

Free Enterprise Group (2011–22), 55
 Hunt appointment (2022), 266–85
 immigration, views on, 66–7, 105, 162, 295–7
 inaugural speech (2022), 126–7
 international relations, 63, 148–64, 223–4, 325–6
 Johnson, relationship with, 41, 61, 62, 155–6, 167
 Justice Secretary (2016–17), 57
 Kwarteng, relationship with, 24, 46, 55, 77, 176, 180, 260–66, 274
 leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), *xviii*, 19–47, 69–86, 177, 320
 Liberal Democrat membership (c. 1993–5), 49, 52, 139
 libertarianism, 66–8, 315
 Manichaeism, 63, 150
 media, relations with, 213, 220, 222–3, 274–5
 Mini-Budget (2022), *see* Mini-Budget monarchy, views on, 139
 nervous breakdown speculation, 10, 171
 OBR, views on, 82, 88, 190, 194–5
 policy beliefs, 64–88, 188–9
 Remain campaign (2016), 23, 49, 52, 56–7, 104, 175
 resignation (2022), 311–21, 328
 Scholar, sacking of (2022), 14, 58, 74, 75, 110–16, 175, 194–5, 206, 215, 217, 239, 243
 Sunak, relationship with, 14, 27, 28, 52, 100, 167
Ten Years to Save the West (2024), 14, 155, 323
 Thatcher, influence of, *see* Thatcher, Margaret
 Trade Secretary (2019–21), 59, 60–61, 69, 84, 112, 239
 Treasury, views on, 14, 27, 59, 68, 73, 74, 75, 82, 83, 108–9, 114, 190, 238
 Ukraine War (2022–), *see* Ukraine War UN speech (2022), 148, 158, 161, 162–3, 169
 Women and Equalities Minister (2019–22), 60
 trust, 175
 Tugendhat, Tom, 27, 28, 33, 34, 38, 99, 103, 294

 U-turns, 7, 12, 13, 42, 146, 227, 229, 254, 256–9, 283–5, 327
 Uber, 58
 Ukraine War (2022–), 21, 27, 30, 62, 64, 99, 105, 129, 136, 150, 151–4, 157, 162, 163, 326
 energy crisis and, 85, 121, 130, 190
 Johnson and, 26, 127, 151–2, 154, 163, 173
 United States and, 148, 152, 160
 unions, 232
 United Nations, 140, 158, 161, 162–3, 169
 United States, 4–5, 11, 61, 63, 86, 129, 158
 Israel, relations with, 224
 Reagan administration (1981–9), 53, 64, 65, 150, 159, 184, 202, 231, 323
 Revolutionary War (1775–83), 119
 ‘special relationship’, 64, 158–61, 164, 325–6
 Trump administration (2017–21), 150, 154, 224

Ukraine War, 148, 152, 160

Value of Mathematics, The (Truss), 55

value-added tax (VAT), 199, 282

Venezuela, 248

Verity, Ted, 228

Virgin Money, 209

Vote Leave, 66, 67, 157, 278

Waldegrave, James, 2nd Earl, 5

Wallace, Ben, 21, 25, 29–30, 38, 39, 62, 99, 105, 106, 152, 290, 294

Walpole, Robert, xvi, 6, 92, 119, 146, 178

War and Gold (Kwarteng), 55

‘War on Whitehall Waste’, 42

Ward, Karen, 282

Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke, 146

‘wets’, 94, 102, 258, 268

What it Takes (Cramer), 54

WhatsApp, 15, 40, 193, 222, 225

whiteboard, 96

Whittaker, Craig, 259–60, 303, 305, 308, 309

William, Prince of Wales, 138

Williamson, Gavin, 33, 35, 100, 145, 231

Wilmington, Spencer Compton, 1st Earl, 10

Wilson, Harold, 8, 51, 149, 172, 238

Windsor Castle, Berkshire, 140

Windsor Framework (2023), 61, 159, 326

winter fuel allowance, 247

Winter of Discontent (1978–9), 120

World Bank, 241

Xi Jinping, 61

YouGov, 28, 41, 214

Young, Edward, 125, 133, 134, 136

Zaghari-Ratcliffe, Nazanin, 61

Zahawi, Nadhim

- Cabinet formation, 98, 176
- Elizabeth II’s death, 134–5, 139, 140
- Free Enterprise Group, 55
- Kwarteng’s sacking, 265, 266
- leadership election (Jul–Sep 2022), 26, 27, 28, 38, 39, 42
- leadership election (Oct 2022), 318
- Truss’ resignation, 294

Zelenskyy, Volodymyr, 129, 153, 162, 163
Zinoviev, Grigory, 13–14

ALSO BY ANTHONY SELDON

Churchill's Indian Summer: The Conservative Government 1951–55
By Word of Mouth: Elite Oral History
Ruling Performance: Governments since 1945 (ed. with Peter Hennessy)
Political Parties Since 1945 (ed.)
The Thatcher Effect (ed. with Dennis Kavanagh)
Politics UK (joint author)
Conservative Century (ed. with Stuart Ball)
The Major Effect (ed. with Dennis Kavanagh)
The Heath Government 1970–1974 (ed. with Stuart Ball)
The Contemporary History Handbook (ed. with Brian Brivati et al.)
The Ideas That Shaped PostWar Britain (ed. with David Marquand)
How Tory Governments Fall (ed.)
Major: A Political Life
10 Downing Street: An Illustrated History
The Powers Behind the Prime Minister (with Dennis Kavanagh)
Britain under Thatcher (with Daniel Collings)
The Foreign Office: An Illustrated History
A New Conservative Century (with Peter Snowdon)
The Blair Effect 1997–2001 (ed.)
Public and Private Education: The Divide Must End
Partnership not Paternalism
Brave New City: Brighton & Hove, Past, Present, Future
The Conservative Party: An Illustrated History (with Peter Snowdon)
New Labour, Old Labour: The Wilson and Callaghan Governments, 1974–79 Blair
The Blair Effect 2001–5 (ed. with Dennis Kavanagh)
Recovering Power: The Conservatives in Opposition since 1867 (ed. with Stuart Ball)
Blair Unbound (with Peter Snowdon and Daniel Collings)
Blair's Britain 1997–2007 (ed.)
Trust: How We Lost it and How to Get It Back
An End to Factory Schools
Why Schools, Why Universities?
Brown at 10 (with Guy Lodge)
Public Schools and the Great War (with David Walsh)
Schools United
The Architecture of Diplomacy (with Daniel Collings)

Beyond Happiness: The Trap of Happiness and How to Find Deeper Meaning and Joy
The Coalition Effect, 2010–2015 (ed. with Mike Finn)
Cameron at 10 (with Peter Snowdon)
Teaching and Learning at British Universities
The Cabinet Office 1916–2016 – The Birth of Modern British Government (with Jonathan Meakin)
The Positive and Mindful University (with Alan Martin)
The Fourth Education Revolution (with Oladimeji Abidoye)
May at 10 (with Raymond Newell)
Public Schools and the Second World War (with David Walsh)
Fourth Education Revolution Reconsidered (with Oladimeji Abidoye and Timothy Metcalf)
The Impossible Office?: The History of the British Prime Minister (with Jonathan Meakin and Ilias Thoms)
The Path of Peace: Walking the Western Front Way
Johnson at 10 (with Raymond Newell)

Their Terrifying Plan

VERNON COLEMAN



Machine Translated by Google

NATALIE PORTMAN is an Oscar winner for best actress, director, producer, activist and starred in films such as **Closer: Too Close, V for Vendetta, The Professional, Cold Mountain, Love and Darkness, Jackie, Thor: Love and Thunder**, several of the franchise Star Wars, in addition to **Black Swan**. She was born in Jerusalem, Israel, graduated from Harvard University and currently lives with her family in Los Angeles. **Fábulas** is his first illustrated book.

THE AUTHOR

Machine Translated by Google

JANNA MATTIA was born and raised in San Diego. She graduated with a degree in Entertainment Illustration from Laguna College of Art and Design and now works in concept and character art in films, licensed illustrations and commissions. This is her debut as a book illustrator. Learn more about her at jannamattia.com.

THE ILLUSTRATOR

Machine Translated by Google

Ine@ir
lerrifying
Aela

PHOIP COR Fein CLAN

Their Terrifying Plan

Vernon Coleman

Loan Stale peed

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

Books by Vernon Coleman include:

Medical
The Medicine Men
Paper Doctors

Everything You Want To Know About Ageing
The Home Pharmacy
Aspirin or Ambulance
Face Values
Stress and Your Stomach
A Guide to Child Health
Guilt
The Good Medicine Guide
An AtoZ of Women's Problems
Body power
Bodysense

Taking Care of Your Skin
Life without Tranquillisers
High Blood Pressure
Diabetes
Arthritis
Eczema and Dermatitis
The Story of Medicine
Natural Pain Control
Mindpower
Addicts and Addictions
Dr Vernon Coleman's Guide to Alternative Medicine
Stress Management Techniques
Overcoming Stress
The Health Scandal
The 20 Minute Health Check
Sex for Everyone
Mind over Body
Eat Green Lose Weight
Why Doctors Do More Harm Than Good
The Drugs Myth

Leung resdins spead

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

Complete Guide to Sex
How to Conquer Backache
How to Conquer Pain
Betrayal of Trust
Know Your Drugs

Food for Thought
The Traditional Home Doctor
Relief from IBS
The Parent's Handbook
Men in Bras, Panties and Dresses
Power over Cancer
How to Conquer Arthritis
How to Stop Your Doctor Killing You
Superbody
Stomach Problems - Relief at Last
How to Overcome Guilt
How to Live Longer
Coleman's Laws
Millions of Alzheimer Patients Have Been Misdiagnosed
Climbing Trees at 112
Is Your Health Written in the Stars?
The Kick-Ass A-Z for over 60s
Briefs Encounter
The Benzos Story
Dementia Myth
Waiting

Psychology/Sociology
Stress Control
How to Overcome Toxic Stress
Know Yourself (1988)
Stress and Relaxation
People Watching
Spiritpower
Toxic Stress
I Hope Your Penis Shrivels Up

25 trons ltt book

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

Oral Sex Bad Taste and Hard To Swallow
Other People's Problems
The 100 Sexiest, Craziest, Most Outrageous Agony Column Questions (and Answers) Of All Trme
How to Relax and Overcome Stress
Too Sexy To Print
Psychiatry
Are You Living With a Psychopath?

Politics and General
England Our England
Rogue Nation
Confronting the Global Bully
Saving England
Why Everything Is Going To Get Worse Before It Gets Better
The Truth They Won't Tell You. About The EU
Living In a Fascist Country
How to Protect & Preserve Your Freedom, Identity & Prnvacy
Oul Apocalypse
Gordon ts a Moron
The OFPIS File
What Happens Next?
Bloodless Revolution
2020
Stuffed
The Shocking History of the EU
Coming Apocalypse
Covid 19 The Greatest Hoax in History
Old Man ina Chair
Endgame
Proof that Masks do more harm than Good
Covid-19 The Fraud Continues
Covid 19 Exposting the Lies
Social Credit Nightmare on Your Street
NHS What's wrong and how to put it nght
They want your money and your life

25 rons lt nt book 1%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

Diaries and Autobiographies
Diary of a Disgruntled Man
Just another Bloody Year
Bugger off and Leave Me Alone
Return of the Disgruntled Man
Life on the Edge
The Game's Afoot
Tickety Tonk
Memortes 1
Memories 2
Memories 3
My Favourite Books

Animals
Why Animal Experiments Must Stop
Fighting For Animals
Alice and Other Fnends
Animal Rights - Human Wrongs
Animal Experiments - Simple Truths

General Non Fiction
How to Publish Your Own Book
How to Make Money While Watching TV
Strange but True
Daily Inspirations
Why Is Public Hair Curly
People Push Bottles Up Peaceniks
Secrets of Paris
Money power
101 Things I Have Learned
100 Greatest Englishmen and Englishwamen
Cheese Rolling, Shin Kicking and Ugly Tattoos
One Thing after Another

Novels (General)
Mrs Caldicot's Cabbage War

25 rns el ut book 2%:

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

Mrs Caldicot's Knickerbocker Glory
Mrs Caldicot's Oyster Parade
Mis Caldicot's Turkish Delight
Deadline
Second Chance
Tunnel
Mr Henry Mulligan
The Truth Kalls
Revolt
My Secret Years with Elvis

Balancing the Books
Doctor in Paris
Stones with a Twist in the Tale (short stories)
Dr Bullock's Annals
The Awakentng of Dr Amelia Leighton

The Young Country Doctor Series
Bilbury Chronicles
Bilbury Grange
Bilbury Revels
Bilbury Country
Bilbury Village
Bilbury Pie (short stories)
Bilbury Pudding (short stones)
Bulbury Tonic
Bilbury Relish
Bilbury Mixture
Bilbury Delights
Bilbury Joys
Bilbury Tales
Bilbury Days
Bilbury Memores

Novels (Sport)
Thomas Winsden's Cricketing Almanack
Diary of a Cricket Lover

20 renih welt wt book

THEIR ESR FYING PLA

The Village Cneket Tour
The Man Who Inhented a Golf Course
Around the Wicket
Too Many Clubs and Not Enough Balls

Cat books
Ahce's Diary
Alice's Adventures
We Love Cats
Cats Own Annual
The Secret Lives of Cats
Cat Basket
The Cataholics' Handbook
Cat Fables
Cat Tales
Catoons from Catland

As Edward Vernon
Practice Makes Perfect
Practise What You Preach
Getting Into Practice
Aphrodisiacs — An Owner's Manual

The Complete Guide to Life

Written with Donna Antoinette Coleman
How to Conquer Health Problems between Ages 50 & 120
Health Secrets Doctors Share With Their Families
Animal Miscellany
England's Glory
Wisdom of Animals

Copyright Vernon Coleman July 2023
The right of Vernon Coleman to be identified as the author of this work has been
asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

2G ris tel in buok Bowe

THEIR ~EPR FYING PLAN

Dedicated to Antoinette
Thank you for being you and for being with me.

Thank you for every day you spend with
me. Every day is a gift from God

* Over that little life that still remains to me,
and at my death, deign that your hand be present.

You know You are the only hope I have'
(From the Canzoniere by Petrarch)

1 Se as ele nn bask

biu SG ns tel nmbook

THEIR ESR FYING PLAN

Screenewt saved
lapio yee Pour saree Ishot

SFIS RE Eoll CELE

Vernon Coleman

an

<k

THCIR CORO ING PLAS

Their Terrifying Plan

Vernon Coleman

THEIR FERRIFYING PLAN

Screenshot saved
lagio yew your screenshot

Contents SHARE EDI DELETE

Part One. How things are
Part Two. Interlude
Part Three. How things got the way they are
Part Four Here's what you. can do
Appendix 1 A short bibliography

1 dr 5G runs 4682 in book

THEIR ESR FYING PLAN

Screenenol saved
lapio yee your saree 13hot

Part One SHARE = EDIT DELE!

1

It is customary, when wnting a book explaming how and why something has happened, to put the history bits first, to explain the past before dealing with the present and, possibly, the future

In this book I have done the opposite
I have begun, in Part One, with an account of the world in which we hve,

drawing attention to the anomalies and mconsistences, the threats and dangers and soon Itis an objective analysis of the world in which we hve, and the anom-ahes and apparent coincidences which now make up our everyday lives

In Part Three, I have analysed the events which have brought us to this unhappy state, the very brink of the Great Reset and the New World Order In this part of the book IJ have explained in some detail the who, the why, the what, the when and the how Many apparently unconnected events have taken us slowly but certainly towards the position we are mn now' on the very bonk of the Great Reset and a permanent loss of our freedom and the essentials of our humanity

It can be confusing and bewildering to try to work out why a bunch of bilionaire bankers shoud stand behind gangs of communists, neohberals and rampant fascists The attraction of fascists for communists, and vice versa, 1s no mystery They appear to stand, or sit, at the far ends of a pohtical continuum but in fact the continuum is a circle not a line and fascism and communism sit closely together The term 'neoliberal' is, of course, merely an acceptable, mad-ern replacement for the word 'communist' But why would billionaire bankers sit with neolkberals?

The explanation is a simple one
The bilhonaire bankers know that a world government will mean that some-

one has to look after all the finance, commerce and natural resources and take control of all the money And they, the bankers, will selflessly step forward to take control— with the neoliberals providing the front men and women for a to-tahtanan government which appears to rule the world but which merely serves as an admimstration for the puppet masters A world government will mean a world court, a world army, a world central bank with a single (digital) currency, a world tax system, a world welfare state, world economic planning, mandatory population control of some kind and with health and education organised on a global scale It will also mean that members of the pubhe will not be allowed

Pi SS ns tel mt book AN

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

to own any weapons Think about 1t carefully and you will realise that some of these aspects of world government already exist and the rest are 1n preparation

A look at Part Three of this book will show you precisely how the bankers and financiers have, throughout the 20th and 21st century, already succeeded in using politictans and organisations such as the United Nations to enable them to take control of many of the world's resources, much of the world's wealth and mndeed, whole countnes This part of the book 1s a timeline for the accumulation of oppression, deceit and egregious corporate and institutional behaviour The bilhonatres and bankers have for decades been investing billtons of dollars in their takeover and they have been using taxpayers' money, and the hard work of small farmers and workers everywhere, to help them take control They have used defence spending and foreign aid programmes to enable them to take more and more power, and they have financed somal unrest and the absurd climate change myth in order to introduce legislation which furthers ther ambitions and gives them ever more power over everyone and everything In a fair and decent world power should be shared among the people In the world which the globalists are preparing, all the power will be in the hands of a few, unelected greedy, self-centred mdividuals

I haven't filled this book with references because ta do so would add a month to the time taken to prepare the book for publication And there isn't time Time isrunming out Also, todo so would double the size and price of the book Readers who question or doubt any of my assertions can easily check them valdity by doing research of their own {remembening, of course, that the essence of good research is to know what questions ta ask and where to look to find honest answers - usually outside anything associated with mainstream media organ-isations, which have persistently and determinedly refused to print evidence which does not support the theories which are favoured by the conspirators)

It is vital to understand that there ts no evidence that man-made climate change 1s a dangerous threat, or even exists, and a considerable amount of evi-dence to show that changes 1n the weather are nothing more than the ordinary climactic changes which have occurred since man first started noticing and recording the weather The sometimes scary scenarios publicised by the climate change cultists (for whom the collective term should be 'enemies of manland') are nothing more than scaremongering propaganda produced by people who will never allow any debate or discussion about their prognostications It is Important to remernber that for some years now the conspirators, desperate to

Tin 5S ms wlt np book 5%

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

create changes in the weather, have dumped millions of tons of potentially toxic sun-blocking nano-particulates such as alumina, barium and strontium above the earth in sometimes successful attempts to affect the weather, damage crops and cause mass starvation And as their efforts begin to work, they will demand more restrictions and more lockdowns and claim, inevitably, that these are nec

essary because of the changes in the weather which will by then have taken place

Remember everything! have reported in this book can be easily checked from reliable sources I have included a short bibliography at the end of this book to help you do your own research I own and have read all these books (and many more) in preparing this volume

2

The conspirators are winning (and they obviously are) because they have taken complete control of the mainstream media and much of the internet, They know that if you control what people read, see and hear then you can control what they think The mainstream media has always been fairly corrupt but in recent years the corruption has become absolute Broadcasting organisations such as the BBC and newspapers such as The New York Times now specialise in the dissemination of propaganda, misinformation and disinformation, rather than news

Propaganda used to be crude It used to consist of posters and slogans and it used to be promoted in a pretty obvious sort of way Simple, dramatic propaganda probably reached its apogee during the First World War when the English were taught that the Germans were eating babies In Germany posters everywhere simply read 'God Punish England'

But slowly, the psychologists and the brain washing experts took over and propaganda became infinitely more subtle and ever-present.

In 1957, Vance Packard wrote a book about advertising and he called it The Hidden Persuaders He explained how advertising copywriters used psychological tricks to persuade us to buy the products they were selling. They sold soaps and deodorants by suggesting that if you didn't use their product then, well, not even your best friends would tell you the unpleasant truth Copywriters used guilt, greed and envy to make consumers open their wallets and their purses and to spend more than they could afford on products they didn't really need but had been tricked into believing that they wanted or had to have

Tu 53 rns elt nr book G6:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

Today, most propaganda is unrecognisable as such Crude threats of pestilence, war, famine and death have been replaced with subtler, created fears Occasionally a triptych phrase or an advertisement will stand out as rather obvious and clumsy but most of the time ideas and fears are promoted and 'sold' in the

same Way as cars or cornflakes but are sold with a subtlety which makes it nigh on impossible for the casual observer to realise that they are being manipulated And, of course, that isn't surprising since the people behind the manipulation are well-qualified professionals, many of them trained in war-time psychological techniques used to oppress and convince resistant civilian populations

Propaganda isn't always what it seems to be and even intelligent observers can sometimes find it difficult to work out precisely what the ultimate aim of a particular campaign might be Some propaganda material appears on official government advertisements, of course, but most of it appears in the traditional mainstream media As the pandemic began in 2020, so shops and businesses began to stop buying advertising There was no point in companies spending money on buying adverts when all the shops and most places of business were closed by the strict lockdowns that were in force around the world (The key thing to remember is that everything that happened at that time happened in virtually every country in the world Never before had such strict and identical laws been introduced on a global scale) And so governments stepped in with huge advertisements, bought every day at full price The big mainstream media companies (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) had never had things so good Internet companies also found that they were receiving huge amounts of advertising money from governments And, of course, in the UK the BBC had already been bought with the licence fee and the huge hand-outs of taxpayers' money which the corporation had become accustomed to receiving

(In addition, the BBC entered into a financial arrangement with a certain Bill

Gates, an amateur vaccine enthusiast and professional investor in vaccine companies, whose enthusiasm for hiring doctors and nurses to stick needles into strangers was and is unprecedented. It is difficult to think of a more disreputable organisation Gates, like Prince Andrew, was a close friend of Epstein and has financial links with many media companies including The Guardian which published a painfully obsequious article about him The BBC has broadcast lies, denied truths, taken sides, when it is supposed to be impartial, supported the EU, from which it has received bucket loads of money, and broken at least one very significant promise -to provide free TV licences to those over 75)

Then S52 is well known book G™:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

And to make sure that propaganda works most effectively, the people paying for the propaganda ensure that their messages remain free of opposition by using censorship to control critics and those offering questions or alternative points of view

Propaganda and censorship are twin, synergistic weapons used to control public opinion and to promote the views (whatever they may be) of those paying for the propaganda and the censorship Opinions and facts which don't fit the conspirators' agenda are suppressed or completely banned.

(It has recently been suggested, by a social psychologist, that students should be taught how to counter conspiracy theories and propaganda Such a scheme was introduced in Finnish schools in 2014 I would welcome such a scheme if

I had any faith that those teaching the curriculum were able to define 'propaganda' fairly and objectively Sadly, the evidence shows that the world is awash with dishonest, bought-and-paid-for fact checkers and 'misinformation and disinformation' units (such as the one run by the BBC) which merely promote and defend what the conspirators tell them to promote and defend)

The result of all the propaganda, is that most people still seem to think that the barrage of bad things happening are all happening now by accident or by coincidence That simply isn't true Everything is happening on purpose; everything is orchestrated There is a malign force manipulating our lives - a malign force controlled by the conspirators It is no accident that there is now an untreated global epidemic of anxiety and depression with mental health problems now probably the commonest health disorder affecting children It is terrifying to see that in the UK well over eight million people are being actively treated with anti-depressant drugs (which, for the record, have been shown not to work)

Today, propaganda is used to manipulate and to control
All things considered it is perhaps not surprising that there are so many

strikes around the world, why violent riots are commonplace, why inflation is soaring, why health care is deteriorating rapidly, why travel has become deeply unpleasant (when it's possible), why millions of children are undernourished and immunized, why the police no longer bother investigating serious crimes and why corruption is now so commonplace that no one in authority notices or cares

3

Ti 50 mins with nr book Fabra

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

While propaganda around the world has been spread by professional teams of misinformation specialists, debate and balanced discussion has been banned.

For years now it has been illegal even to discuss the holocaust (which was, uniquely, dignified with an initial capital letter, in the same way that covid was subsequently given an initial capital letter or, in many cases, written out entirely in capital letters to make the word look even more important)

I don't question the holocaust | don't pretend to know what happened or did not happen

What I do find immensely troubling is that experts who claim to have evidence, or substantiated views, can be sent to jail simply for wanting to debate the accepted truth

And this clampdown on debate is being extended
The mainstream media refuses to debate climate change, the covid pandemic

or the dangers of vaccination - among other things A very dangerous precedent has been set Governments want criticism of vaccination programmes to

be treated as terrorism. At least one US Presidential candidate for the 2024 elections has said that critics of climate change theory should be put in prison

Since the 1980s, the climate change myth has been promoted with great certainty by the controlled mainstream media. But nothing that has happened in the last century has been in any way abnormal, and for climatologists and meteorologists to claim that they are able to warn with confidence of what the weather will be like in 50 or a 100 years time is extraordinarily nonsensical, since weather forecasters have a job to predict what tomorrow's weather will be like with any degree of accuracy.

The truth is that the majority of climate change scientists do not agree that man-made climate change is a problem and most of the hysterical warnings which have appeared in the media have been based on computer simulations and are worthless.

For a brief summary of the climate change fraud I recommend a small book entitled 'Greta's Homework', written by Zina Cohen. Many of the most absurd scaremongers have been proved wrong time and time again. So, for example, one leading expert (Dr Kenneth E.F. Watt, an ecologist at the University of California), predicted that the world would be 11 degrees colder by the year 2000 and that we would be in an Ice Age.

There is no scientific evidence supporting the politically motivated claim that climate change is a real problem. The climate change myth was created by the

The 69 series book PNz

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

globalists who are desperately trying to create a threat which will move us towards a world government. And sadly, now, most people don't question what they are told. Some are too frightened of what they might hear to ask questions, they don't want to know the answers and they don't want to have to confront the fact that they are living in a world where the propagandists (such as the New York Times, the Washington Post and the BBC) have turned black into white and white into black. Some simply do not believe that they could have been lied to so consistently and so vehemently.

The same is true of other scare stories which have been run in recent years. Broadcasters, newspapers and respectable sounding pressure groups have all lied constantly and consistently about the ozone layer, acid rain, pollution and infections.

Huge amounts of money are being made by the campaigners and professional agitators who run the organisations and charities trying to 'sell' the myth of climate change.

As happened with AIDS in the latter part of the 20th century, anyone promoting the officially approved party-line will be swamped with grants and financial support.

(I remember debating the issue of AIDS on LBC radio in London. Afterwards,

standing on the pavement outside the studio, I asked my 'opponent', a campaigner for a homosexual group, if he really believed the nonsense he had shared with the audience. He readily admitted that he didn't, but that he had lied and produced fake figures simply to try to win the argument. He was, he said, concerned that if AIDS were considered to be a problem which only affected homosexuals then it would receive no public support or money.)

On the other hand, anyone who questions the myth will be destroyed professionally. Television performers who stick to the globalists' line about climate change are feted and offered vast sums of money while those who even dare to question the official line suddenly become unfashionable and unemployable.

Those who argue that man-made climate change is a serious problem consistently refuse to debate their views in public. As with the covid-19 vaccine, the refusal to debate is good evidence of a fraud and a cover up.

The result of all the lies is, I'm pleased to report, that the majority of people simply don't believe that climate change is real. Even after being bombarded with threats and fears, managed and controlled by governments, pressure

to tell the world the truth:

THEIR ERRONEOUS PLAN

groups and international bodies such as the United Nations, most people remain resolutely sceptical.

4

The true story of the conspiracy taking us towards the Great Reset and the New Normal is a story of unprecedented wickedness.

It is a story which has taken me years to unravel. It is a story of deceit, corruption and of a small group of men and women with an unquenchable thirst for power and an unnatural appetite for wealth. It is a shocking story which explains how a small group of relentless megalomaniacs have manipulated billions of people around the world into believing a completely fabricated myth - the myth of man-made climate change - solely so that they can take complete control and create a new world government. (Note the term 'climate change' is now frequently used together with the prefix 'existential' as though this gives this entirely unsubstantiated theory some gravitas.) It is a story of how well-meaning but naive individuals have been tricked into believing carefully concocted lies about the environment, and then acting as if those lies were true. It is a story of financiers and billionaires bribing and pulling the strings of politicians and bureaucrats. It is a story of endless deceptions. It is a story of conspirators deliberately turning free men and women into slaves, unable to take responsibility for their own actions and totally dependent upon the State for everything they do. It is a story of ruthless advocates for fake pandemics deliberately creating fear and panic and then offering some sort of solution. This is, in short, a story of the most horrifying, evil plot ever concocted by man and in this book I will give you the evidence showing how this fraud has been carefully and deliberately manufactured.

Throughout the world, governments have accepted the agenda force-fed to them by a cadre of neo-liberals. Exactly the same economic mules are now applied everywhere. So-called reforms introduced by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation and the Federal Reserve, and the central banks under the auspices of the Bank of International Settlements in Switzerland, and all sponsored by the Bretton Woods institutions have created a perfect environment for global banks and multinational corporations. The label 'neoliberal' might imply a kindly, free market system but under the authority of the neoliberals a new system has been created which gives authority, power and pretty well nearly all the money to the bankers. As both Plato and Aristotle

Ta So? ms welt np book ON:

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

recognised, wealth is addictive. The bankers behind the conspiracy to create a World Government can never have enough money. They manipulate, they lie, they cheat, they defraud and they have no feeling for the people from whom they steal. As long as they get another billion or two in the bank they don't care about the millions who die. And they prefer to make their money without having to work for it.

5

I should mention, in passing, that the IMF and the World Bank and so on are regulatory bodies which were created to operate on behalf of the world's governments but in practice they operate on behalf of the world's biggest banks and corporations and work with secretive and unelected organisations such as the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers, the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Chamber of Commerce, the Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue, the United States Council for International Business, the Institute of International Finance and the World Economic Forum. It is the last of these, the WEF, with its annual meetings in Davos, which is perhaps the most dangerous (I will explain how these organisations work in Part II of this book). These organisations meet in secret with bankers and do so in closed sessions. Most of their deliberations and conclusions are secret - even though the costs of their meetings, and the huge costs of the security provided may be met by taxpayers.

6

You have been subjected to a barrage of lies for much if not all of your life. You have been the victim of a confidence trick of brooding proportions, a deceit that even the Baron Munchausen would probably find too unlikely.

And yet, as I have promised, everything I'm about to tell you is true. In Part Three of this book I have named names and places and I've given dates in order to explain precisely how, when, where and why this fraud has been systematically concocted. The globalists describe anyone who questions what is happening as a 'conspiracy theorist' but when you've read Part Three, you will realise that this conspiracy is no theory.

The bottom line, the unavoidable, unpleasant truth, is that everything is far worse than you thought it was. The world is not being deranged by accidents, it is not being derailed by coincidences. Everything that is happening has been carefully planned, everything is deliberate. We are victims, you and I, of the

Tt 46 mins elt nr book g%:

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

biggest, longest and most comprehensive conspiracy in history Slowly, methodically and ruthlessly, a relatively small group of conspirators have steadily taken control of every major institution in the world They have bullied world leaders, they have replaced kings and presidents with their own men and they have stolen and deceived in a way that the Cosa Nostra would surely envy The conspirators are for the most part American and phrases such as ‘US exceptionalism’ and the ‘reserve currency dollar’ mean that the United States can ignore international law, tell other countries what to do, invade sovereign states with impunity, wage wars at someone else's expense, build up massive, international debts which they never intend to pay off, steal natural resources (such as oil, gold and minerals) without compensation or apology and force countries to hand over assets and local monopolies to multinational companies in America

All around the world billions of people have been threatened, impoverished, bullied and punished in order to enrich American banks, American financiers and American corporations In many cases where Americans have invaded and stolen resources they have left behind chaos and abject poverty Look, for example, at what happened to Iraq, Libya and Syria to give but three modern examples

And the final irony is that despite the fact that it has pillaged and raped whole continents, the United States is now by far the world's largest debtor It has successfully turned the dollar into a way to make other countries finance its global war mongering The foreign reserves of central banks around the world consist of dollar dominated assets and only now (in 2023) are countries such as China, India and South Africa demanding new principles for international law, trade and finance

(It is curious, by the way, that millions who believe in the existence of the Cosa Nostra find it impossible to believe that well-educated men and women from good families could possibly be involved in an even bigger scheme to control the world's population The members of the Cosa Nostra, the Triad and similar organisations are content with running drugs and prostitutes, and to protect their enterprises they steal, maim and kill hundreds of people The conspirators, the bankers and financiers, and their allies (whom I classify as the collaborators) want control of everything and everyone and to protect their ambitions they steal, maim and kill hundreds of millions)

And both conspirators and collaborators have acquired a robust sense of entitlement

Tt 46 mins elt nr book Gz

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

A medium level bureaucrat working for the Government in India accidentally dropped his smart phone into a reservoir So he had the reservoir drained, with millions of gallons of water being wasted, so that he could look for his phone

Every where in the world, on an hourly basis, entitled bureaucrats abuse their power in a thousand different ways

7

The wickedness, the insatiable greed, the hypocrisy, the blatant cruelty, the ruthlessness and the depravity of American politicians, bankers and billionaire financiers is hard to believe

For over a century ruthless men and women, some of them well-known, some

of them the holders or former holders of public office, some of them secretive and anonymous and some of them freelance power brokers who have moved effortlessly from the world of finance to the world of government and back again. So, for example, numerous executives have moved between banks such as Goldman Sachs on the one side, and governments and the most powerful NGOs (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) on the other

Rents, interest and huge financial charges (including massive bonuses paid to bankers whether or not they have done their jobs well) are, bizarrely, counted as 'financial services' and listed in a nation's accounts as part of the country's Gross Domestic Product

(Financial services should really be regarded as debts and countries, such as the United Kingdom, where financial services make up a major part of the nation's GDP must inevitably be doomed. In those countries, real productivity (making things and providing genuine services) have become secondary to the provision of lending money and the fees and charges associated with moneylending.)

Anyone who questions the role of the banks is, inevitably, described as a 'conspiracy theorist' and as 'discredited'. Those terms appear time and time again, so often that it is clear that they are designed and spread by specialists working for agencies such as the CIA. And the abuse is decorated with decades old stereotypes which can be rewritten to produce doubt, by manipulated truths, by half-truths and by downright lies. Anyone who questions governments and bankers will be labelled a conspiracy theorist and called discredited by a fake encyclopaedia called Wikipedia which appears to be controlled by the CIA and similar organisations from other countries.

Ti 2S mins wlt ni book G™:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

(Larry Sanger, the despairing co-founder of the site Wikipedia, has used the word 'corrupt' to describe his creation. A deal between Wikipedia and Google means that the links put on Wikipedia are reproduced on Google to reach a larger audience.)

They help to prevent anyone exposing the conspiracy from reaching more people. The conspirators and the collaborators who work for and with them are specialists in psychological warfare and in the basic elements of 'controlled Opposition'.

The key thing to remember is that there are now no coincidences in geopolitics or modern history and nothing is happening by accident. However chaotic and unpredictable and out of control you feel things are, you should understand that everything that has happened in the last few decades (and particularly in the last three years) was planned. It was, indeed, planned so carefully and with such precision that for the last three years in particular, since early 2020, it has been possible to forecast what will come next (I have predicted almost everything that happened since early 2020 and the evidence for that is available on my websites)

I naturally hope that as many people as possible will read the evidence I've collected and will ignore the attempts by the conspirators and the collaborators to discredit me and the book. Sadly, most of the people who should read this book won't touch it, they won't read it because they have been brainwashed by the mainstream media working for the conspirators.

8

I have been thoroughly discredited and demonised by the establishment, and the fact that for over 50 years I have produced accurate predictions and analyses has been suppressed and ignored. The very fact that this book will not be available in bookshops or public libraries, and will not be reviewed, or even mentioned in the mainstream media, tells us much. My books have been published by many leading hardback and paperback publishers and have been translated into 26 languages and sold around the world. But, as with my other books on this subject, I will have to publish this book myself because no orthodox mainstream publisher will dare publish it. In the past most of my books were sensed in newspapers and magazines. Several of them were turned into series for television and radio. This book will not appear anywhere else. Like everyone else telling the truth I am led about, sneered at and ridiculed by agents working for

It is well known book "1%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

the conspirators I no longer care that saying this makes me sound paranoid because I know that I am not

The conspirators were never going to take any chances. They knew that once they had begun their campaign towards the Great Reset (formerly known as the Great Merger) their propaganda campaign would be opposed by people who could see through the lies and the misinformation.

And so, right from the start, they knew that they would have to stamp down hard on anyone (especially doctors or media professionals) who dared to question the official line. Anyone who didn't agree wholeheartedly with the idea of the Great Reset was demonised as a right wing extremist and immediately discredited.

Branches of the military and the secret services were employed to attack and discredit the truth-tellers. In the United States of America the CIA has been extremely active in this area. And the FBI has worked with Ukrainian intelligence to censor and suppress Americans on social media (in breach of their first amendment rights). In the UK, much of the work of disinformation, misinfor-

mation and demonization and abuse has been in the hands of the British Army's 77th Brigade. For example, right from the start the 77th Brigade put abusive and libellous remarks in the comments section underneath videos questioning the official line on the pandemic. The abuse was often crude. My videos were constantly full of libellous comments claiming that I did not have a medical degree, that I was a fake and a fraud. And GCHQ (the UK Government's spy centre and eavesdropping agency) was ordered 'to wage cyber war on anti-vaccine propaganda' and 'to take out anti-vaxxers online and on social media'. GCHQ, paid for by British taxpayers, has used dirty trick tactics to control, infiltrate, manipulate and distort online information. GCHQ's own Twitter account claims that their 'brightest people bring together intelligence and technology to keep Britain safe' but in May 2021, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that GCHQ's methods violated the right to privacy and that its regime for the collection of data was unlawful. Who at GCHQ decided that the agency had the right to suppress the truth and to promote lies is still a mystery. The end result of this treachery has been that thousands of people have been killed or injured because they were denied information about the covid 19 'vaccine' which might have helped save them from listening to inaccurate information on the BBC and other areas of the mainstream media.

Tt 43 ns welt np book 12%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

A slightly more subtle approach was to hire individuals to pretend to be on the side of the truth-tellers | suspect that at least half of those claiming to be 'truth-tellers' were actually working for the opposition. Some have ridiculously complex organisations and they have often been hugely successful at collecting money {Some have collected millions of pounds from gullible supporters and, in some cases, big fees from drug companies } And there were others who regarded the pandemic as a career booster and were pliable enough to be allowed onto mainstream television and radio stations where what they said could be directed or manipulated (The real truth-tellers were not allowed access to any mainstream media.)

There is nothing new in any of this, of course. The authorities have always infiltrated pressure groups or those who threaten to cause disruption.

I have always been very active in the campaign against animal experimentation and back in the 1970s and 1980s anti-vivisection campaigns were regarded as the major terrorism threat in the UK. The security services, MI5 and Special Branch, admitted that the absence of outside, traditional terrorists meant that

in order to justify their existence they had to find some alternative and anti-vivisection groups were selected as the most suitable target. This sometimes had bizarre consequences. On one occasion a group of five alleged extremists was arrested. Unfortunately, it was quickly found that four of the alleged extremists were actually representatives of various official groups. One was a member of Special Branch, one was an MI5 officer, one was a policeman and one was an undercover journalist. Only one member of the group was a bona fide animal rights activist. Initially, the activist was charged with the very serious offence of conspiracy but the case quickly fell apart, and was abandoned, when the prosecutors realised that a conspiracy requires two or more individuals - you cannot

change a solitary individual with conspiracy This was not an isolated instance It was common place to find that groups protesting or campaigning against animal experimentation had been infiltrated by those promoting or supporting vivisection - though the majority of the infiltrators were being paid, either by the Government or by the drug industry

Much the same thing is happening today among those telling the truth about the banks, climate change, fake pandemics and toxic 'vaccines'

9

Tb 2 mins welt np book 12%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

There is much bewilderment among intelligent doctors and scientists as to why so many doctors kept quiet about the lies being told when the covid-19 hoax and the fake pandemic unfolded Around the world, hundreds of thousands of doctors kept quiet about the covid-19 'vaccine' and continued to prescribe a product which has been accurately described as the most dangerous and damaging single pharmaceutical product ever marketed The covid 19 jab did not do what the establishment promised it would do but, at the same time, it caused countless thousands of deaths and serious injuries among the patients who were injected

There are two explanations for the fact that so many doctors ignored the evidence and did what they were told to do by dishonest advisors within the medical establishment and bought and paid for journalists and celebrities

The first explanation is that all over the world doctors were extraordinarily well paid to give the covid 19 jabs Hospitals were given bonuses (labeled as bonuses) which were dependent upon the number of patients they injected Doctors were bought off, and dissuaded from asking too many questions, by being paid well over the normal fees for giving vaccinations Those doctors will, in due course, appear in court where they will be unable to mount any sort of defence To say that they behaved unprofessionally and greedily is a massive understatement

The second explanation is that doctors were too terrified to speak out against the medical establishment because they saw what had happened to colleagues who dared to share their views with their colleagues and the general public and who had had their licences removed by the official licensing authorities and, in addition, been vilified by the media

The truth, so well hidden during the last three years, is that the medical establishment was, as it has been for decades, controlled by the pharmaceutical industry and instead of looking at the facts licensing authorities around the world merely did as they were told to do Numerous doctors lost their licences, and their livelihoods, because they dared to speak out and tell the truth The majority of doctors, seeing what had happened to those who spoke out, kept quiet and betrayed their patients, themselves and their profession Those gutless wimps should be ashamed

In the United Kingdom, doctors are licensed by the General Medical Council,

an organisation which is, in theory at least, a charity but which appears to have some of the worst qualities of a quango, a government department and an enforcer for the drug industry I believe that drug companies control governments,

Ti S71 ns welt nr book 13%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

they control the medical establishment and, it appears, they may also control the UK's medical licensing authority—the General Medical Council

The GMC has become infamous for its extraordinarily one-sided defence of the exaggerated covid pandemic and the pointless but enormously dangerous covid vaccine

When the fake pandemic was first promoted in February and March 2020, I immediately described the covid scare as a hoax. The figures available proved without any question that the danger of what was clearly merely a rebranded annual flu had been massively exaggerated by people who had a bad track record at assessing the relevant figures. In the UK, the Government's own official advisors agreed with me, dismissing the covid 19 infection as being no more dangerous than the annual flu. Inevitably perhaps, their expert advice appears to have been ignored in favour of advice from a mathematician with a terrible track record.

Naturally, the conspirators behind the exaggerated risk did not like my description of the covid scare as a hoax (a video I made was seen by many millions within days) and I was quickly demonised and led about in the media. The GMC couldn't take away my licence because their own administrative rules meant that, as with many doctors, my retirement from active practice meant that I'd had to give up my licence. But younger doctors, who were convinced by my arguments or who reached the same conclusions, were to feel the full wrath of the drug company controlled medical establishment.

So, for example, consider the case of Dr Mohammad Adil who, until three years ago was a respected surgeon working in the NHS. Three years ago, Dr Adil criticised the Government line on covid, and the GMC responded by taking away his licence - meaning that he could no longer practise as a surgeon or, as a doctor in any capacity. Three years later, Dr Adil still didn't have his licence back. The cost to him has been extraordinary. And we should not forget the cost to the NHS. If we consider that in those three years he could have performed 1,000 operations a year — not an unlikely number—then his three year banishment means that 3,000 patients have been denied the operations they needed.

Several other doctors in the UK had their licences removed for criticising the absurd and indefensible covid policy. And exactly the same thing happened around the world where licensing authorities have ignored the scientific evidence and punished doctors who dared to share the truth with the world - usually on social media,

Ti 46 mins welt np book 13%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

It was this unscientific bullying, and the widespread publicity given to the consequences, which ensured that thousands of doctors kept quiet - frightened that they too would lose their licences and their livelihoods. A doctor without a licence to practice is as useless as a sweep without his brushes or a taxi driver without a cab.

The GMC's decision to deny Dr Adil his licence was always unjustifiable. First, there is the question of free speech. Article 19 of the United Nations

Charter states clearly that 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression'. There is no codicil limiting the rights of doctors. The GMC's decision is in direct opposition to this fundamental human right. It has been argued that doctors have a special responsibility because of their position and training but this strengthens rather than weakens the UN charter. Doctors have a special responsibility to speak out when they believe that something is wrong. And, of course, you can't have a little bit of free speech any more than a woman can be a bit pregnant. You either have free speech or you don't. To say that a doctor cannot criticise the medical establishment is as nonsensical as saying that an opposition party politician cannot criticise the Government. The licensing authorities which have removed doctors' licences for speaking out are undeniably in breach of the UN Charter. How a lawyer or a judge can justify allowing any licensing body to deny an individual's right to protection from the UN Charter is, I confess, a mystery. Doctors are entitled to share their views with the public and the public is entitled to decide whom to believe.

Right from the start the doctors supporting the Government and drug companies have steadfastly refused to debate in public, and the mainstream media has taken an entirely biased, unbalanced one-sided line in reporting the fake pandemic. The BBC, ignoring its own charter and repeated claims of fairness, has even stated that they would not interview anyone questioning the value of vaccination whether they were 'right or wrong'. I have frequently challenged vaccine supporters to a live, national public debate. None has had the confidence or the courage to accept the challenge.

(The conspirators and the collaborators have not just refused to debate the pros and cons of the covid vaccine. They have refused to debate any of the contentious issues. You might think that the most confident conspirators and collaborators would be delighted to have the opportunity to debate their beliefs about climate change, the Great Reset and their plans for a world government, and to air the details of the science which they claim is behind their new re-

Ti 46 mins welt np book az

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

ligion. But they don't want to debate and the only logical conclusion is that they know that they would lose any debates because they have no supporting evidence.)

Second, the GMC has assumed that the Government and the medical establishment must always be correct and beyond criticism. This is dangerous nonsense. One doesn't have to go very far back in history to find numerous examples of times when the Government and the medical establishment have been

completely wrong and, as a result, patients have suffered until doctors had the courage to stand up for the truth. When Dr John Snow gave chloroform to Queen Victoria, there was an uproar in the medical establishment because it was felt that women should not be given anaesthesia during childbirth. Electroconvulsive therapy, leucotomies and the removal of vast lengths of the intestine were all approved by the medical establishment but later condemned. It was because of the medical establishment that tonsils were removed without good reason. No one knows how many children died as a result. A good deal of unnecessary heart surgery has been performed on patients because of bad medical practices promoted by the medical establishment. It was because of bad medical practices condoned or encouraged by the medical establishment that millions of patients became hooked on barbiturates and then benzodiazepines. And I wonder how many of those who have condemned Dr Adil know that widely used and previously approved vaccination programmes have been condemned as worthless and dangerous.

History shows that the medical establishment has been wrong more often than it has been right, and if the GMC stops doctors criticising the Government and the medical establishment (known to be linked to the pharmaceutical industry) then nothing will ever change for the better.

If we go back a little further in medical history we come across individuals such as Dr Semmelweis whose work on women lying in labour wards changed medical practice and saved thousands if not millions of lives. Dr Semmelweis was, of course, viciously attacked by the medical establishment. There are many more examples in my book 'Medical Heretics'.

The undeniable truth is that history shows that the medical establishment has always suppressed the truth and promoted profitable lies. Nothing has changed. The medical establishment still promotes medical procedures which don't work, while suppressing essential but inconvenient truths. The GMC's fun

is 39 ns welt np book 5%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

A fundamental mistake appears to me to be that it has assumed that its loyalty should be to the medical establishment rather than to the welfare of patients.

Third, and more directly perhaps, the evidence now shows quite clearly that the medical establishment's official line on covid-19 was completely false. Everything that the establishment has said and done has been wrong and dangerous. The General Medical Council and all those who supported its decisions seemed to have assumed that the establishment was right.

If they had looked closely at the evidence they would have known that the UK Government's own scientific advisers decided, back in March 2020 that covid was not a major threat. They would have known that Government statistics show that the number of people who died from covid-19 was no greater than the number who die from flu every year (a disease which had mysteriously and conveniently disappeared). Indeed, the number of deaths from what was clearly a rebranded flu was no greater in 2020 and 2021 than it was in some previous years. Moreover, it is now clear that the absurd policies of lockdowns, social dis-

tancing and mask wearing were without any scientific foundation, were unnecessary and dangerous and were in part responsible for the entirely predictable increase in deaths which marked 2022 and will continue for some years to come. The PCR test was never intended to be used as it was, and has been proven, beyond any doubt, to be of no more value than a coin toss. It is clear that the closing down of schools and businesses was also entirely unnecessary and has done massive, long-lasting damage. Worse still, it is now abundantly clear, and generally accepted by intelligent, well-informed doctors and scientists, that the covid-19 vaccine was never properly tested, was never fit for purpose and is the most dangerous and deadly pharmaceutical product ever marketed. Largely because of links with the pharmaceutical companies involved, the Government and the medical establishment misled the public and the health professions. All the evidence for these claims is available on my website and books and in over 300 videos | made between the years 2020 and 2023 (The videos first appeared on YouTube but they were removed piecemeal pretty well as soon as they appeared. And then my entire channel was removed for the new crime of telling truth.)

Finally, there is one other rather shocking reason why the GMC should not have made any rulings about Dr Adil or any other doctors who criticised the official line on covid-19 and the covid-19 vaccine.

Ti 28 ns welt np book 5%

THEIR “ERR FLYING PLAN

The General Medical Council (in my view one of two big enemies of patients in the UK - the other is the British Medical Association) has invested nearly £1,000,000 in fast food and drink firms and, worse still, has invested large amounts of money from doctors' fees in drug companies. And one of the companies in which it had shares was one of the companies making a covid-19 vaccine.

How can the GMC judge doctors' behaviour in relation to covid and covid jabs when it has a vested interest in the financial success of vaccine manufacturers such as Astra Zeneca?

It could surely be argued that the GMC, which has money invested in vaccine manufacture, has a vested interest in protecting vaccine making and should not, therefore, discipline doctors whose actions might have damaged the earning potential of any companies in which it has invested its own money.

The GMC can be compared to a judge punishing someone for criticising a product in which he himself has a financial interest. Indeed, I would argue that the GMC, and its vast army of overpaid, and, it seems to me, sometimes arrogant, pen pushers has abandoned its role as a guardian of the public and become an enforcer for the pharmaceutical industry.

Those who had the courage to speak out should be applauded and it is they, not the promoters of a 'vaccine' that does not do what it was promised to do but which has caused many deaths and much illness, who should be honoured.

In a free and progressive society criticism of the establishment should never be subject to censorship.

My conclusion can only be that the General Medical Council is unfit for purpose and should be closed down immediately. It is not fit to hand out dog licences, and certainly not equipped to control the licensing of doctors. It has failed to do its job to protect the public and it appears to me to have acted more in the interests of the pharmaceutical industry than the interests of patients.

I'm delighted to report that in July 2023, the British Medical Association agreed with my conclusion. The BMA's Annual Representative Meeting has passed a no confidence vote for the GMC and will now call for its leaders to be sacked.

The BMA motion said that 'too many' Medical Practitioners Tribunal Services fitness to practise decisions are 'disproportionate to the error of the doctors mistake' and expressed no confidence in the current tribunal.

Take 3? in select nr book G™:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Doctors voted for a motion calling for the leadership team of the GMC to be dismissed and replaced with a team that 'commands the confidence and support of the medical profession'.

10

It is a sad fact that most people are so indoctrinated that they have no interest in reading anything which may force them to question what their government (and government sponsored media) has told them to think.

The mainstream media has, of course, distracted millions with non-stories about celebrities, minor celebrities and members of the English royal family. The world is in a spiral of deliberately engineered destruction, and with a designer war between NATO and Russia now well into a second year, it is well into World War III, but the mainstream media has pushed the war (and other terrible things which are happening) onto page seven or the end of the news. For the period of the war to date, it has concentrated its energies on the childish exhibitionism of a middle aged couple of former royals who seem to spend much of their lives making public announcements about their desperate desire to be private.

Despite this determined suppression of reality, there is still more than enough scary news around to keep people fearful. Recent large surveys have shown that most people now avoid all the news because they find it too depressing. They see no point in knowing about things which they feel they can do nothing about.

Meanwhile, individual governmental and international bodies use every small hazard as a reason to introduce new, comprehensive and suffocating legislation. A decade or two ago I suspected that this was no more than bureaucrats doing the only thing they know how to do - micromanage - but it is much more than that. The bureaucrats and rule makers have been encouraged to do everything they can to suppress the people.

Around the world, laws are being introduced to make it illegal to share information which is regarded by the Government as 'misinformation' or disinformation even though the news they share might be regarded by a majority of

doctors and scientists as accurate In Australia, for example, there is the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Mis-information and Dis-information) Bill 2023 which will result in truth-tellers being fined up to \$500,000

There is no doubt that today a great many people are frightened to view the truth (or even something which they fear may be the truth) because the lies they have accepted have resulted in their doing things for which they would

Turns out we need a book GTM:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

feel ashamed So, for example doctors and journalists who helped promote the wicked and fake covid fraud do not like to acknowledge the part they played in the creation of a false global panic Nor do they like to see the evidence showing that the covid-19 'vaccine' which they recommended with such enthusiasm has caused many thousands of deaths and serious life changing injuries

Even if you know some of the truth this book will shock you And it will perhaps surprise you to discover that the villains in the world are not the people whom we have been taught to see as villains (Putin, Xi, Gaddafi, etc)

Our freedom is being taken from us at an incredible speed by people who appear to be respectable and part of the establishment The ground work for the removal of our freedom was done decades ago Now we are in the final stages of the takeover It may sound insane but a small group of committed, self-serving extremists now dominate the political systems in all major Western countries and they control the global economy It is because of this power and money hungry clique that we are controlled from birth until death by unseen hands And the control is tightening by the day The conspirators are introducing a digital world and a digital currency There will soon be a global government, controlled by unelected but appointed individuals who, in turn, control our every move through the invidious system of social credit, a restrictive system which I described in some detail in my book Social Credit Nightmare on Your Street

11

The frightening thing about social credit, as a manipulative programme of control, is the way in which it is being introduced insidiously — without many people really noticing what is happening For example, in England, the tax authorities will, in 2026, be introducing a new points system for those who pay their tax late If a taxpayer collects a set number of points they will receive a financial penalty On the roads, motorists have been told that if they bump into a cyclist they may be sent to prison for life (Knocking over a pedestrian is fine, it seems, but cyclists must be protected.) And in school, children are being forced into a social credit system which even the Chinese might find horrifying. At a school in Devon, some pupils have been told that they cannot attend their school prom if they haven't accumulated enough 'praise points' Pupils get 'praise points' in five categories being ready to learn, enabling others to learn, treating the environment and others with respect, working to the best of their ability and fulfilling their responsibilities 'Praise points' are apparently awarded by staff as a reward

Turns out we need a book 7%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

for 'positive behaviour' One parent said. 'This has caused emotional harm and it is not kind and inclusive to these children banned from the prom'

Of course it tsn't But I dont think anyone ever claimed that social credit schemes were designed to be kind and tnclusive

12

The conspirators are ruthless and heartless m a way which most of us find difficult to comprehend They control everything we do They control banking and transportation and health care and they already own or control most of the world's natural resources They start wars, when wars suit their purposes (regardless of the death and destruction those wars will cause), they create hatred between black and white and between men and women and they push economies into recessions and depressions when to do so serves their purpose The conspirators, who usually like to describe themselves as (and to be described as) 'philanthropists' deltberately introduce policies which they know will kill hundreds of milltons of people, even billions of people, because they know that those policies will make them more powerful and ever ncher (The myth of philanthropy is commonplace among bilhonaires John D Rockefeller Sr used to arrange for himself to be photographed giving dimes to children This was the basis for his reputation as a philanthropist)

The conspirators know that in order to continue to succeed they must convince the public that thereis no conspiracy And to do this it ts vital, utterly vital, to suppress the truth and oppress anyone who dares to tell the truth The mainstream media, bought and paid for, has enabled the conspirators to do this very effectively Early in 2020 I began making videos for YouTube I acquired a huge number of 'subscribers' within a couple of months and then my channel was entirely deleted and 1 was banned from making more videos or even accessing the channel My crime was a simple but modern one telling the truth Facebook told me that 1 could not join their platform because I would be a danger to their community (There was no discussion and no specific reason was given) 1 was banned by all social media sites (though fake sites tn my name appeared) and publishers suddenly refused to publish my work Publishers around the world withdrew my books from sale - even when those books had been hugely successful For example, publishers in Chia and Germany pulled all my books from sale because I had questioned the efficacy and safety of vaccination programmes There was no debate, no discussion, publishers didn't ask me for evidence ~ my

Tu 35 mins wlt np book 1a":

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

books were banished, to be pulped or burnt Newspaper editors who had been enthusiastic about articles they wanted me to wnte suddenly stopped talking to me and wouldn't even say what had happened

Censorship has long been a problem for authors, of course Animal Farm by George Orwell was refused by anumber of the publishers who saw tt. One admitted that the Minustry of Information in London had advised him agamst pubhish-Ingit

And those doing the banning usually find some strange ways to excuse their actions. In June 2023, the European Union banned the publication of information which it thought did not support Ukraine with enough enthusiasm or which was regarded as supporting Russia in some way. Reporters who tried to put both sides of the story, and who attempted to tell the truth, were punished. The EU claimed that it was controlling the flow of independent information and doing this to protect freedom of speech.

Journalists and commentators working for mainstream publishers are very well paid to ignore facts which might be inconvenient. In the US, it has for some time been well known that the New York Times and the Washington Post are no longer fighting to publish independent truths, both seem too inclined to support the conspirators and the establishment. An American software billionaire, Bill Gates, a well-known lay proponent of the covid-19 vaccine, has given huge sums of money to The Guardian and to the BBC in England. The Guardian, for example, was given £12 million by Gates. The BBC, which had also received money from the European Union, had close financial links with the vaccine supporting billionaire. Both The Guardian and the BBC produced hagiographic profiles describing Gates as a philanthropist. Curiously, both organisations seemed subsequently to ignore Gates' links to Jeffrey Epstein, the disgraced financier. Other individuals, including an English prince and a leading bank executive, have been ruined by their connection to Epstein but, to the surprise of some, Gates remains relatively untouched.

As I have previously pointed out, at the height of the covid-19 fraud in 2020, one BBC presenter announced that the BBC would not debate the subject of vaccination with anyone criticising the vaccine 'whether they were right or wrong'. Such blatant prejudice is difficult to believe, particularly when offered by a State broadcaster which has a duty to provide a fair and honest assessment of the news. The only good thing you can say about the BBC staff is that they lie and promote propaganda with a straight face. When they repeatedly insist that two

Two 35 mins with np book 1a":

THEIR ERRONEOUS PLAN

plus two equals five they do so with such solemnity that the mass of people believe them, and doubt their previous suspicion that two plus two comes to something else, a sum which they can no longer quite remember. The BBC has betrayed the licence fee payers, and obeyed the demands of its own left-leaning liberal staff, promoting misinformation and disinformation with enthusiasm. During the fake pandemic in 2020, the BBC held meetings with the British Government and one can only assume that these meetings were to decide what was to broadcast and what truths to suppress.

The art of spreading misinformation and disinformation successfully depends upon the victim being prepared to believe what he or she is told. Repetition of the misinformation is vital and it helps if those spreading the lies are regarded as reliable and honest. Over the years the BBC had built up a reputation as a respectable and honourable source of news but happily that reputation is now in tatters and surveys show that only a minority believe anything on BBC news programmes.

The pattern I have discovered, the map I've drawn, will not only explain what has already happened (not just in the last few years but going back longer than anyone alive can remember) but it will also enable you to see what we can expect in the future. We do not ordinarily see these things because they are hidden from us, they are disguised when they are not suppressed. Even when coincidences are pointed out to us we do not see them as connected because they are simply too great for us to comprehend ('no one could possibly do that', we say to ourselves) and the malefactors, the conspirators, too evil for us to understand. The conspirators who have driven the conspiracy forwards are not just bad men and women in the way we understand the word 'bad'. We tend to think of serial killers as evil but the evil of the globalists is far beyond anything most of us can comprehend. Obama, the Clintons, Blaw, the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers et al are just as irredeemably evil as Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Stalin and other psychopaths. Their cold-blooded manipulations are designed to destroy everything we hold dear and everything we respect as human. They live to manipulate by deceit. The conspirators are different to the rest of us.

Most people want to have some control of their own lives, they want a relationship, a home, some belongings and a position in their community. They want to do what they can to help others.

Tu 34 ns welt np book 0%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

The conspirators are quite different. They want power over other people and they have an insatiable yearning for wealth. The conspirators' actions are driven by how they see their role in the world (not by any desire to help the world). American bankers see US hegemony and the dollar's position as the world's reserve currency as vital to their own wealth and so they will do everything to protect these things. They want a global government controlled by America. They want to create compliance, and slavery, through social credit. They use war to reduce a population which they regard as too large.

And who needs all those people when robots and artificial intelligence programmes can replace many of them? In spring 2023, two British telephone companies warned of massive redundancies with Vodafone announcing that it was sacking 11% of its workforce and British Telecom expecting to sack 42% of its workforce. Most of those made redundant will never work again and their skills will be allowed to wither. Supermarkets are sacking staff members and replacing them with automated tills. Soon the shelves will be stocked by robots. Banks are closing branches and pushing their customers to do all their banking online.

One of the aims of Artificial Intelligence programmes is to make demoted humans feel worthless, insignificant and powerless. The manipulators are using the myth of climate change to create naive followers who do their work for them in destroying ordinary society.

Through a potent, toxic mixture of greed and selfishness, the neoliberals are deliberately destroying mankind in order to enrich and empower themselves. (The neoliberals really came into power with Bill Clinton's Democratic Party in the US

and with Tony Blair's Labour Party in the UK.)

If they succeed with their plans for the Great Reset, everything we are and care about will die, not inevitably, as the stars are dying, but murdered by the evil few (far, far fewer than nought point one per-cent of the population), and their complacent, complaisant collaborators who do everything they are told to do to oppress and suppress and who probably make up between one and five per cent of the population

I suspect that many of the collaborators, confused ignorant, unmmnformed unmmmapinative, greedy, obedient and paid well beyond their natural skills, do believe what they are told, they believe that the world is threatened by man-made global warming and that there really was a dangerous epidemic in 2020

Tu 33 ns welt np book ~0™:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Back in 2020, I warned that the collaborators would be our nemesis I still stand by that Our main threat has always come not from the conspirators themselves, who are such a tiny number that they could not possibly have great influence over the world's billions, but from the politicians, doctors, central bankers, journalists, NGO officials and celebrities who defended the conspirator's theories and who promoted their wicked schemes, the lockdowns, the vaccines and their endless lies

Electors everywhere keep putting their faith in political parties and in politicians They vote for different parties in the everlasting hope that they will one day be served by an honest government, It has been said that one sign of lunacy is to keep doing the same thing in the hope that the outcome will be different Every new government, everywhere in the world, promises much but delivers nothing All political parties now make the same false promises and then ignore the will of the people who voted for them Back in 1968, George Wallace pointed out that there wasn't 'a dime worth of difference between the two parties' in America. When voting is fiddled (as it is now in so-called developed countries,

Just as much as it is in undeveloped countries) it is not with the aim of putting a particular party into power but with the aim of establishing those individuals who are most readily controlled by the conspirators

In what was perhaps a weak moment of honesty, President Franklin D Roosevelt, who was President of the United States between 1933 and 1945 (making him the longest serving President in American history) gave us a vital warning but I don't think anyone took him seriously and most people didn't listen He said 'In politics, nothing happens by accident If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way

The fact is that things don't keep getting worse by accident, they keep getting worse by design

Hopes and ambitions don't fade by chance, and it is no coincidence that everything seems to go wrong in every country in the world at the same time

And anyone who draws attention to the evidence supporting these conclusions is regarded as deranged and is immediately discredited, abused and demonised. Professionals, experts in their field, who speak out against authority, are ostracised and usually dismissed as 'right wing extremists'

You will have no doubt noticed that officially there are no left wing extremists but that everyone who questions what governments do will automatically be labelled a 'right wing extremist' or, worse still, labelled as a 'terrorist' or a 'fascist'

Tu 22 mins wilt np book ~0™:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

or both In practice, of course, right wing politicians have been moving steadily to the left for many years and today most leading politicians in the West are best described as neo-liberal. Since there is absolutely no ideological or technical difference between politicians on the very far left, known as communists, and politicians on the very far right, known as fascists, the neoliberals can themselves be accurately described either as international socialists, which is to say 'communists' or as 'national socialists', which is to say 'fascists' or 'neo-Nazis', according to how you feel

In reality, the political spectrum should have totalitarianism at one end and anarchy at the other. All modern political parties are, however, best described as totalitarian in method and intent since their aim is to take total control over aspects of our lives. There is no difference between communism as defined by Marx, total control as defined by the Illuminati in the 18th century and the Great Reset (the New Normal) as proposed by the World Economic Forum, the United Nations and all main political parties around the world

When politicians, bankers and billionaires around the world all get together to do the same things in order to take control of the world's population, what else can you possibly call it other than a 'conspiracy'?

(Those who are puzzled by what is happening, ask why well-known billionaire financiers could possibly advocate communism. The answer, of course, is that under the sort of communism practised in the USSR and China, the people at the top of the pile lived very different lives to the ones endured by the masses at the bottom of the pile. Today's billionaires may publicly advocate a very left wing brand of socialism but in fact they manage to protect their wealth and to avoid paying taxes by having their money, their super yachts, their private islands, and their mansions in the middle of huge acreages, carefully protected in trusts and foundations. Socialism and communism are promoted because they are the most efficient way to control the wealth and activities of the ordinary citizens. Communism may be promoted as a way to give power to the people but in practice the plan is to transfer all power to a bunch of greedy megalomaniacs.)

Eventually even those who want to speak out are frightened to do so because they see what happens to their colleagues. And the ignorant, half-blind collaborators who have done the demonising and the sneering find that they are in a position where they cannot speak out even if they eventually do see the truth. They are committed to the lies they've told because to tell the truth would ex

Tu 22 mins wilt np book a1

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

pose their lies (And, 1n the case of doctors, for example, expose them to massive lawsuits)

Our daily enemies have for years been the woke citizens who have, for the most part unknowingly, served as helpers for the conspirators who have been working against us for a century or more, and who are now coming out into the open a little more as the battle to create a New World Order reaches its zenith (For the record the phrase 'New World Order' was adopted for the title of a book by H.G Wells in the 1940s but the phrase was also used by Richard Nixon in the early 1970s Nixon used the phrase frequently and it was regarded as referring to a world super-state - or the world government which has been the aim of the conspirators for decades)

Encouraged by the conspirators (who are experienced at using the naive and slightly simple-minded to promote their cause) the woke collaborators have done their best to destroy our histories and our culture They have torn down statues and worked hard to damage the reputations of those who opposed the conspirators So, for example, the woke collaborators frequently target Winston Churchill, attacking his statue and his books Anyone who has ever stood up for freedom in any way is maligned and must be erased from culture and history

15

Justice and liberty are now little more than historical concepts, illusions which are today only believed by the naive, the gullible and, of course, the completely compliant Judges are as corrupt as politicians, journalists and doctors and everyone in public life

Western societies were set up to separate the various parts of government, and we are taught to believe that is how things still are Thomas Hobbes said that 'freedom is government divided into small fragments' But it isn't how things are today The various branches of government, the parts dealing with the making of laws, the administration of laws, the control of the police, finance, banking and the trade unions may appear to be separate but in practice they have been brought together Nothing shows this more clearly than the way the European Union operates The European Parliament has virtually no powers and all the decisions are taken by unelected eurocrats who are themselves controlled and influenced not by citizens but by lobbyists When the English people voted to take their country out of the European Union in the historic 'Brexit' vote, the establishment (which is to say the highly paid evil servants and others employed

Tu 37 ns welt np book a1

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

In various ways to administer Government policies) simply refused to make any real changes to the way the country is run The result was that a barrage of new laws were passed by the English Parliament and added to the thousands of EU laws which should have been abolished, but which were kept

As Lord Acton famously said. 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'

Government money (which is to say taxpayers' money) is regularly used to reward favours and to buy complicity and silence And, as the population struggles with roaring inflation, interest rates higher than many people could remember (or were prepared for), disruption caused by climate change nutters, threats of this and that from governments, quangos and the mainstream media, the unions have introduced massive pay demands designed, it seems, to create mfts and to make the poor ever poorer Doctors demanded a 35% pay rise and when that was refused, went on strike and increased their demand to 45% Hospital consultants threatened to go on strike and they too wanted a 35% pay rise to add to their minimum £120,000 a year Nurses went on strike The poor and the elderly were left behind Most demands came from state employees (who were already the best paid and the least hard working and had the best perks such as pensions and the ability to work from home or not at all when the fancy took them)

Who was behind the endless strikes?

The usual culprits of course

The globalists behind the strikers knew that civilisations collapse when the

gulf between rich and poor gets too big and that is exactly what is happening And, of course, the middle classes are being destroyed with ever increasing taxes

Individual liberty and free speech have been sacrificed for what we are told is the collective good

We live in totalitarian states where we are no longer expected to think for ourselves or to manage our own lives in the way we see fit How long will it be before we are not allowed to think at all?

16

The two party state has become the one world state

It is impossible to discern any real difference between the two main political parties in the US or the two main parties in England All parties support the war

Ti 30 mins elt nr book a2:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

against Russia, all supported the covid fraud The parties pretend to squabble occasionally but it is all play fighting We are now inches away from a World Government and since the (American owned) International Monetary Fund has already established its first global tax agreement, the World Government isn't far away

Fifty years ago we were told that the world's socialist governments would come together, under the auspices of the United Nations, to form a global super-state (China was brought into the United Nations because the conspirators knew that in order to control all the world's banking and resources, they needed

every country in the world to join the UN) This new coalition would, it was said, be the Great Merger Nothing much has changed except that things are now moving much rapidly towards global governance and the joining together under what has been mysteriously renamed the Great Reset

It is interesting to note that back in 1950, Richard Nixon, who was a congressman at the time, introduced a 'resolution calling for the establishment of a United Nations police force'

And so it came about, of course

But the United Nations didn't turn itself into a police force Psychologists, be-

havioural scientists, agronomists and others were employed to work out ways to control people

Right at the beginning of the UN's life, there were plans to reduce the size of the world's population and to enforce sterilisation

(It has been reported that some widely promoted vaccination programmes were actually designed to reduce fertility Bill Gates, the amateur vaccine propagandist, claimed that the vaccines he was promoting would save lives and reduce the size of the population in Third World countries It is difficult to see how those two opposing aims can be reconciled unless the vaccines being used had some effect on fertility — a possibility for which there is now a good deal of evidence In numerous countries around the world, euthanasia programmes have been introduced in order to eliminate the elderly and the sick by encouraging them to end their lives In 1953, Evelyn Waugh wrote a novel called *Love Among the Ruins* in which he described a state-run euthanasia centre In Trudeau's Canada, the Government has introduced a very forceful euthanasia programme called 'medical assistance in dying' There were 13,000 state sanctioned 'suicides' in Canada in 2022, and that country is now deciding whether to allow children and the mentally ill to kill themselves In the Netherlands, healthy individuals

30 minis welt nr book 3%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

with autism are allowed the option of euthanasia, and Australia is deciding whether to let children as young as 14 kill themselves (or allow someone to do it for them) Today, euthanasia is legal in Belgium, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Columbia and parts of Australia

In hospitals in the United Kingdom, it is now routine for patients who are admitted to hospital to ask if they want to be resuscitated If they fall seriously ill Patients are warned that resuscitation can be painful and difficult and may leave them with broken ribs As a result, many agree to have 'Do Not Resuscitate' labels put on their hospital charts Patients who are frail or unable to give consent are often labelled 'Do Not Resuscitate' without the consent of relatives, and the decision not to provide care for patients who are seriously ill may be made by quite junior nurses instead of a team of doctors and nurses as used to be the case a few years ago

All over the world, there are plans to destroy local police forces, to destroy local health care and education programmes and to make sure that all citizens (in countries such as the US) hand in their guns. The plans originated with the United Nations.

Anyone who has ever worked for the United Nations must have known exactly what was happening and must have understood the aims of the organisation for which they were working. UN staff are highly paid and lowly taxed, and were and are traitors who should be executed for their crimes against mankind.

18

To encourage citizens everywhere to accept the idea of more State control, it was decided that noters should be allowed to disrupt towns and cities all over the world, ostensibly campaigning against racism, climate change and other issues. These plans were made over half a century ago. Individuals campaigning against the plan for a world government were silenced and arrested but individuals whose activities were considered 'acceptable' to the conspirators were allowed to do pretty much what they wanted to do. Today, there is evidence that the demonstrators who are left alone by the police (the ones campaigning for 'black lives' or for 'net zero') are receiving vast amounts of money from the conspirators and, indeed, demonstrations are allowed only if they are approved by the conspirators. Groups of people complaining about the use of oil are al-

Tir 29 ns welt ni book 3%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

lowed to disrupt traffic, damage buildings and cause massive inconvenience. In an attempt to appear even handed, the police will occasionally interfere and the courts will punish one or two of those involved but only well after the fact and never before - as frequently happens with those protesting about the conspiracy or about the monarchy. No one in Parliament seems to care overmuch that the activities of climate change protestors are undoubtedly responsible for far more deaths than climate change itself. People have missed essential hospital appointments, ambulances on emergency calls have been halted and motorists have been unreasonably subjected to the stress of interminable and unnecessary delays. The complicity of the police and the courts makes it clear that these illegal activities are condoned if not encouraged by the authorities. And as a bonus, the demonstrations provide excuses for the conspirators to introduce more oppressive laws, to give the police more powers and to take away freedom and privacy from everyone.

The campaigners don't realise it but they have been manipulated and controlled like so many puppets. Campaigns for affirmative action and positive discrimination and demands for reparation have been organised by the conspirators to create a new form of acceptable racism, designed to create anger and racial disharmony.

The acceleration of the climate change fraud which is promoted by a small but very vocal group of bad tempered, aggressive, hectoring and ignorant fools with no respect for others is taking us, unwillingly, towards the lunacy of net zero. The climate change fanatics (having feasted on a diet of pseudoscientific arguments) think they are now minning the world. And, indeed, they are.

On the face of it, their hectoring and campaigning has been extraordinarily successful but in truth, of course, the campaigners have been allowed a free ride. The campaigners have been funded by bankers and billionaires who sometimes masquerade as philanthropists.

(All great fortunes were, of course, obtained through lying, cheating or stealing or all three and more. It is possible to become a millionaire through hard work and imagination but it is only possible to become a billionaire through dishonesty or through having an ancestor do something dishonest on your behalf.)

The climate change fraud was, of course, all about money and power. The self-styled environmentalists and greens who promote the climate change myth want to stop African countries from using fossil fuels. Since without fossil fuels those countries will never be able to advance their civilisations in the way that

Tier 23 ns welt nr book 1d":

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

countries in the West have progressed, it seems undeniable that the whole net zero climate change argument is irredeemably racist.

I'm afraid that environmentalists and Greens are often deeply unpleasant people. A fellow from New Mexico, called Dave Foreman, who co-founded an organisation called 'Earth First' is reported to have described humans as a cancer on nature. Foreman, an ultra-radical environmentalist, favoured 'demonstrations' in which members drove spikes into trees (potentially killing foresters and in at least one case resulting in the operator being severely injured), tore down power lines, sunk whaling ships and poured sand into the fuel tanks of logging equipment.

19

In 2020, the conspirators ramped up their battle to take over the world by introducing the entirely invented 'coronavirus pandemic hoax'.

Right from the start it was clear that the pandemic hoax had been invented for three main reasons: to bring in some form of compulsory vaccination programme, to provide an excuse to exterminate a large number of old people (the conspirators have long felt that the world is overpopulated and long worried that the elderly population costs too much in pension payments) and to create a situation where cash could more easily be outlawed. That's what I said in February and March 2020.

There was more to it, of course.

The conspirators had decided to use their fake pandemic to help them lead

the way forward to the development of a world government — the great reset, the new normal, the new world order.

All this was being promoted by the World Economic Forum (with its extraordinary enthusiasm for the abolition of private property, as promoted in the Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx) and by a secret organisation known as the Bilderbergers which consists of a bunch of bankers, arms dealers, drug company

bosses, food company bosses and obedient politicians

The fake pandemic with its lockdowns and enhanced compliance programmes was seen as an essential step towards the introduction of a system of social credit, digital currency and digital passports. The covid fraud was seen as a way to obtain total control over all citizens.

20

Tie 27 rns elt nr book 5%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Central bankers, bankers and left wing politicians are all desperately keen to eradicate cash and to force everyone to use digital money - in the form of credit cards, debit cards, crypto-currencies and accounts with organisations such as PayPal. Scores of central banks already have their digital currencies ready - eventually they'll be moulded into a single global currency known as the Universal Monetary Unit or, quite possibly, the Unicorn.

The standard argument of those who want to replace cash with digital currency is that using your smart phone at the till is more convenient than using cash. What the bankers and collaborators don't mention is that the price for that convenience is compliance and slavery. You can flash a piece of plastic, your watch, your smart phone or your tattooed or implanted wrist, instead of having to put up with the burden of carrying cash in a wallet or purse, but the unspoken downside is that in return you have to put all your trust in the integrity and good intentions of the bankers and central bankers - people who have already boasted that they will use your reliance on their services to decide how you spend your money, where you spend it and how much of it you are allowed to keep.

The bankers, the conspirators, want to control every transaction as part of the social credit-digital world they are building. Governments, banks, supermarkets, travel agencies, health care services, the police will combine their databases with YouTube, Google, Facebook and other monstrously intrusive organisations which collect, own and then sell your private information.

I've been warning about the end of cash for at least three decades, and the conspiratorial authorities have been pushing hard for the introduction of digital currencies since the days before laptops and smart phones.

Today, the bankers (aided and abetted by politicians) are closing banks as fast as they can (arguing falsely that everyone wants to bank online) and they're making it difficult to take cash out of your bank. ATM machines are rapidly disappearing, and if you try to take cash out of your account over the counter you could well end up being interrogated like a criminal.

Once the digital currencies become the only way to earn, save or spend, we will all be slaves. The central banks will be able to control our money. They already plan to limit each individual to between £10,000 and £20,000. Anything more than that will simply disappear. Negative interest rates will discourage savings. Money will have a limited shelf life — just as money in mobile phones can disappear after a few months. And the bankers will decide how you can spend

your money

Tir 27 ns welt np book 5%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

It is worth pointing out, by the way, that the central banks have mostly become 'independent' When this happened in the UK, in 1997 the Labour Government misled the country, saying said that it was giving the Bank of England its independence and granting it operational independence over monetary policy so that it could be free of government influence In fact, this was rather disingenuous since all central banks were modified to suit the requirements of the financial elites — who prefer to deal with independent banks In the European Union, it was the Maastricht Treaty which gave independence to the central banks The European Central Bank, in the EU is controlled by Deutsche Bank (which was for a long time controlled by Abs, a former Nazi) and other German and European banks The EU and its Parliament have no control over the bank or its policy Monetary policy all around the world is controlled by the world's leading financial institutions Governments, remember, have no control

Everyone, it seems, wants to get rid of cash

First, companies which accept payment by card have to pay commission to

the credit card companies The commission can sometimes be very high with 5% and 7% commission rates not at all uncommon

Second, clearing banks don't like cash because handling it is time consuming and, therefore, expensive Moving money around simply by pressing numbers on a keyboard is much quicker and cheaper (though, curiously, the length of time required to move money from one account to another seems to have lengthened since such methods became available)

Third, governments and government agencies love to see citizens forced to rely on digital money because it is much easier to keep control of what everyone is earning and spending when all money goes through computers So, for example, in the UK the tax office (HMRC) easily obtained details of what taxi drivers are doing by looking at the records from companies such as Uber When drivers apply to renew their licences, HMRC sends out threatening letters suggesting that they may have made an under declaration or no declaration at all

And, of course, there are all those individuals who think that using plastic to pay for everything is clever and modern They don't realise that plastic cards and chips under their skin are enslaving them and removing the last vestiges of freedom.

Any business which relies on a financial trail (eg one that uses an e-commerce site) can now be easily monitored by all government departments And, of course, it is much easier for banks or the Government to cut off an individual's

Tie 26 mines tel nr book 1G%:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

access to their own money if everything is done digitally And when all money is digital, banks and other financial institutions will be able to charge what they like Tax authorities will take what they like from your account

In the new world of digital money, anyone who shares what is labelled 'hate speech' or 'misinformation' will be banned from having an account (It

is, of course, already happening) All those old tweets, and the time you gave a 'thumbs down' to the WEF, will be marked against you

Remember how American citizens who gave money to the Canadian Truckers had their bank accounts frozen? If you've ever criticised your government then they will make you pay heavily for your impertinence

Those individuals who have already lost their PayPal accounts will probably never be allowed to have digital accounts And without digital accounts they will starve

It's already becoming nigh on impossible to buy petrol without a credit card And the number of car parks where cash is still accepted is shrinking fast

Banks throughout the world are preparing to close down all free thinkers If you think I'm exaggerating just check out what has already happened

It has been made clear (by the Bank of England and other clearing banks) that when cash has been replaced with digital currencies, the banks will control how people spend their money It will be possible to make broad judgements (for example, no one will be able to buy alcohol) and specific ones (patients with early heart trouble will not be allowed to buy certain foods) It will also be possible for governments, banks and companies to monitor spending habits So, if there is a shortage of eggs for example, the authorities will be able to make sure that no one buys more eggs than they are allowed

Removing cash from society will make life incredibly difficult (for which read "impossible") for those who are not computer literate, for beggars and for char-

ities who rely on cash The quality of our lives will be massively diminished by the disappearance of cash And, of course, getting rid of cash can be used to track where we go and what we do

Many local councils are now forcing motorists to use an App available only on a smart phone to pay for parking, and in those places it is impossible to pay for a parking place with cash The information which motorists are forced to give can be used in many ways (and will be sold for a variety of purchasers so, for example, thieves will know when householders are away from their homes) Forcing motorists to use a smart phone in order to park a vehicle is clearly discrimina-

Tir 25 ms welt nr book 16%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

tory (since it means that those without a smart phone cannot park) and almost

certainly illegal

And, of course, people tend to over-spend when they use credit or debit cards for everything they buy Using cash helps keep people out of debt

It's vital to remember that they want to get rid of cash for their benefit and not for our benefit Removing cash will empower the conspirators and remove, forever, the last vestiges of our independence

We really are close to the end as far as cash is concerned According to data provider Merchant Machine, cash is now used in only 1% of payments in the most digitalised economies in the world, now including Sweden, Denmark, Singapore and the UK Every time anyone uses a credit or debit card, or flashes a contactless payment card for a small purchase, they are taking us closer to a digital society and digital enslavement.

The end of cash is now just months away
And when cash disappears it will take with it the last vestige of our freedom
The restrictions on what we can, and cannot, do with our own money get

longer by the day For example, states within the EU will have to collect information on the ownership of luxury goods such as aeroplanes, boats and cars and each member state will have to establish a financial intelligence unit' Rules in England now make it extraordinarily difficult for citizens to access their own money or even to move it from one account to another

I recently tried to take some of my money out of my account and was shut in a room and interrogated like a criminal before eventually and rather begrudgingly, being given an envelope containing the cash I'd asked for

Even moving from one account to another has become fiendishly bewildering and time consuming

I was standing in a bank the other day trying to move money from one account to another I was moving my money from one of my own accounts to another of my own accounts [don't know if you've tried doing this recently but it gets harder by the week You need to produce a driving licence or passport, of course (Heaven help you if you don't have one or the other, or preferably both) And you need your bank card And, depending upon the mental state of the cashier, you may need a utility bill, a tax form and a council tax demand You may soon need a note from your mother

And, of course, they now have a veritable litany of questions to fire at you 'Has anyone asked you to make this transaction? Are you under pressure to do this'

Tir 245 nis tel np book a hz

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

And so on and so on They pretend the questions are to protect us but only the naive and dim-witted believe that These stupid questions are devised by very wicked people to delay the whole procedure and to force us all to bank online

One of the daftest questions is this one 'Is anyone waiting outside for you?'
Standing next to me, at the neighbouring window, stood a little old lady well,

in her nineties She too was trying to move money from one account to another
so that she could pay a bill

'Is anyone waiting outside for you?' asked the bank clerk
'Oh yes,' said the little old lady naively 'My friend brought me'
The clerk looked as pleased as if she'd won the lottery 'Oh, well I can't help you

then,' she said with a big smile and a sense of satisfaction you could have bottled
The little old lady didn't understand 'But my neighbour had to bring me,' she

explained. 'I'm 93 [had to give up my driving licence'
The poor woman didn't understand that logic and honesty are no longer

relevant

'But your neighbour might have put you under pressure to make this trans

action,' said the clerk, full of sanctimonious, self-righteous, box-ticking
obedience

'My neighbour?' said the old lady 'Why would she do anything nasty to me?
I've known her for nearly 50 years " She looked around, bewildered 'I've been
banking here for years Doesn't anyone recognise me"

'That doesn't matter,' said the clerk, her joy now slightly diluted by exaspera
tion 'I can't help you if you have someone waiting for you. Those are the mules '
And then she added the killer It's for your protection'

And so the old lady, puzzled and confused, tottered out of the bank and back to
her neighbour's car

I swear that happened And I'm not surprised
(The banks make a great fuss about our responsibilities and their lack of

them. But did you know that Barclays Bank has just been fined \$361 million
by the US Securities and Exchange Commission? And do you know why? Well,
they 'accidentally' sold \$17.7 billion worth of structured financial products for
which they did not have authorisation The total effect on shareholders (includ-
ing many pensioners), as a result of this \$17.7 billion 'accident', was to help push
down net income by 19% The little old lady's one mistake was that she didn't
tell the clerk to move \$17.7 billion that she didn't have from one account to an

Tir 23 ns welt np book a:

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

other They'd have done that with a smile and probably given her a free pen and
a cup of coffee too)

Morons (of whom there are many these days) claim, as they have been told,

that the inquisition is for our benefit That's yet another lie The banks want to force us online And, as a side effect, they want to absolve themselves from blame when they screw up (which they do on a regular basis) If you want evidence that the banks have been politicised just look at the way that individuals who dare to stand up and question the system lose their bank accounts In Canada, citizens who stood up in defence of truckers protesting about vaccine mandates, lost their bank accounts And the same thing is happening with frightening regularity everywhere else In England, the boss of an independent platform carrying free speech videos lost his bank account and found that no other bank would accept him as a customer No one could tell him what his crime was Nigel Farage, the well-known politician, was suddenly told that a bank he had been with for 40 years was going to close his accounts - both business and personal A man who asked why his local building society was festooned with flags celebrating homosexuality found the cost of free speech when the building society responded to his query by closing his account

Bank staff seem to have been indoctrinated by the same people who indoctrinated NHS staff, train drivers, civil servants, teachers, council employees and Just about everyone else in this increasingly miserable and oppressive world of ours

(Teachers call what they do 'brainwashing in a good cause' But can brainwashing ever be defended? If the evidence for their claims were solid and honest they would not need to make stuff up or to attempt to brainwash their students For decades now, school teachers have been indoctrinating rather than teaching their pupils, promoting the myth of climate change, changing history to meet woke demands and altering the balance of history to suit their propaganda And refusing to allow pupils to question or debate the official version of history)

Taking cash out of your own account has become an exercise in patience and determination

I recently went into a branch of my bank wanting to take out some money - a little more than the machine would allow me to withdraw I had bills to pay and I wanted to buy some presents

'Are you going to take this money home and keep it there?' asked the clerk

Tim 23 ns elt nr book a:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

I thought this was an incredibly stupid question The woman was a stranger and she had my address on a screen in front of her She wanted to know if I was going to take money home and keep it there to be stolen What an idiot So I was a little cautious As any sensible person would, I said 'No'

'So, why do you want this money?' asked the smug bank clerk
'To buy sweets,' I replied It has been my standard reply to this question for

years

Bang | could tell from her eyes that the metaphorical shutters had come

down

You can't make light-hearted comments any more

The clerk looked at her screen as if it were telling her something

'Your request has been blocked,' said the clerk

In full sight of other customers I was ushered into a room and the door was

closed

And I was interrogated I felt like a criminal Most people would, I think, have

found it a humiliating and embarrassing encounter

Phone calls were made | was instructed to answer questions put to me on

the telephone (I couldn't understand the questioner's accent and so! needed a translator) To check my identity I was asked for my date of birth (a piece of information that is about as secret as Prince Harry's level of affection for his brother)

And eventually, after what seemed like several hours of interrogation, I was, with ill-grace and no apology, given the amount of money | had requested.

It wasn't a loan I was asking for It was my money

(As an aside, a week later we had to call a drains expert in to deal with a

drain which had been blocked by tree roots The man dealing with our drains told me, in precise detail, about my experience at the bank He even knew the precise amount of money I'd tried to take out of the bank Banks may pretend to care about their customers but there are, it seems, no longer any rules about confidentiality)

It is, of course, all part of the scheme to force us to bank online ~ ready for the digital currency they have ready for us

Your bank hates you They want to turn you into nothing more than numbers on a computer

And the staff of banks everywhere are, | fear, too stupid to realise that as soon as the digital currency is here, managed entirely online, then they will all be

Tir 22 nes tel nr book «9%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

surplus to requirements Every last one of them will be joining the dole queue - where they will stay forever, surviving on their Universal Basic Income and living in a small cardboard walled flat the size of a dog kennel

The idea of providing citizens with a Universal Basic Income, now so popular with governments and conspirators and neoliberals everywhere, is not a new one During his first year as President of the United States, Richard Nixon announced his 'New Federalism' programme which would provide a Guaranteed Annual Income to all Americans The proposal would have massively increased the power of the Government Left-wingers welcomed the idea as an example of

'creeping socialism' Nixon also suggested a decentralisation programme which was ostensibly designed to spread power to local politicians by handing out subsidies and payments Nixon announced that he had become a Keynesian What he forgot to mention was that John Maynard Keynes, the economist, was a socialist whose intention was to promote the 'euthanasia of capitalism' Like almost all economists who followed him, Keynes was a neo-liberal, an intellectually, emotionally and morally stunted breed without whom the conspirators would have never been able to promote their Great Reset The chief beneficiaries of the efforts made by the neo-liberals have, of course, been those 'working' in the finance, insurance and real estate sectors of society for those are now where wealth accumulation is taking place - well away from traditionally useful commercial and productive activities The chief losers have been those involved in making and selling products which people need in order to live and the clear winners have been those in financial services who pay themselves huge bonuses even when their banks are losing money The global economy is not built on the handling of money rather than the making of things or providing those services which make people's lives better

21

Much of what is happening is described as progress but it isn't really, of course — it's just change And a good deal of this change continued to keep us all too busy to notice what is going on in the world, and too wrapped up in our own daily problems to take action against the conspirators, the collaborators and the constant attacks on our freedom and humanity Even small things become incredibly time consuming and exhausting The bizarre and indefensible 'recycling' programmes which were introduced globally (everything happens in lockstep these days) were designed to make us worry about non-existent climate change, to

Tir 22 ns welt nr book 36%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

make us compliant and to force us to accept that we must do what we are told, even in our own homes, and to keep us busy Most of the carefully washed and sorted recycling material is dumped or burnt, and the environmental cost of collecting recycling material far exceeds any value that might accrue In the UK, for example, much of the recycling material has been carried to countries far away to be dumped or burnt There isn't even any point in recycling paper (the most traditional recycling material) It is better for the environment to grow trees for that purpose and to burn the discarded paper to produce electricity or heat

If you order a book (or whatever else) online you will be bombarded with emails There will be a message to say that the purchase has been made, one to say that your order is being dealt with, another to let you know that the book has been passed to the delivery company, one to let you know that the delivery company has received the package, one to inform you that the delivery company is preparing to deliver the book, one to let you know that the book is on its way and one to tell you that the package has been delivered Then you will receive an email from the seller to let you know that the delivery company has done their job and delivered the book. Later there will be another email from them wanting you to rate their service and one from the delivery company wanting you to let them know how well you think they did. If you don't reply immediately those emails will be repeated at regular intervals This barrage of unnecessary emails

keeps us occupied with pointless trivia (Not infrequently, I receive two copies of each of the emails in this tedious chain }

The word 'progress' is used as a synonym for 'better', but how do you define 'better'? Is receiving an email from a friend on holiday better than receiving a postcard? Is the world better when cars all look exactly the same? Is it better when log fires are forbidden by health and safety officials? Are trains better now that there are no restaurant and sleeper cars? Or has life been destroyed by fanatics, cultists and ignorant meddlers, acting, unknowingly, on behalf of conspirators arming for a Great Reset? Is life better now that there are no junk shops, no rag and bone men and no odd job men who could repair just about anything you couldn't deal with yourself? Is life better now that family doctors work the same hours as librarians and you have to plan your emergencies a day or two ahead if you hope to ride to hospital in an ambulance? Are hospitals better now that nurses spend more time in meetings than on the ward and are always too busy, and self-important, to find a bedpan, plump up pillows, help a frail patient with their meal or put a bunch of flowers into a vase? Is it progress that children

Tie 27 ns welt nr book 36%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

now learn with the aid of iPads instead of being taught with pens and paper and chalk and a board? Is a smart phone real progress over a piece of slate and a slate pencil? Children half a century ago played hopscotch, skipped with ropes and in the winter played football with coats as goalposts while in the summer they played cricket with stumps chalked on lampposts. On their summer holidays they splashed in paddling pools or sailed toy yachts on boating ponds (all now filled in for health and safety reasons) and they rode on donkeys and played one penny games on the pier. Is it simply nostalgia when you know in your heart that things really were better then?

If you object to all progress then the conspirators will label you a 'Luddite', even if much of what they label progress isn't progress at all.

It isn't difficult to argue that children have little or no future today. The conspirators and the collaborators have taken away their education, their hope, their sense of comfort and even their happiness. Mental health problems among the young are rising at a rate never seen before. Even before the fake pandemic of 2020 the incidence of such problems among the young was frighteningly high. Today, there is an epidemic of mental illness. Millions of children, teenagers and young people are taking tranquillisers and anti-depressants (even though these have been proven to be of no value) and often taking them for years at a time. The lockdowns, the social distancing regulations and the partial or complete closure of hospital departments mean that those requiring specialist help will be on waiting lists for years if not for life.

Is a pub with a log fire and friendly bar staff better than a pub with a good internet connection? Are motorways, with endless queues, better than winding country roads which take you to your destination just as quickly and with far more pleasure? Are self-driving cars better than cars which have to be driven? How will self-driving cars manage to navigate English country roads and all those tiny, blind junctions? Who is going to provide a suitable call out service for

all the electric cars which are stranded in country lanes when their batteries run out?

Is a traditional English breakfast better or worse than a bowl of sugar coated cereal? Why does it now take a week or more for a postcard to reach its destination when in Victorian times, in the 19th century, a postcard put in a pillar box in the morning would arrive at its destination in the afternoon? The postcode or zip code was, surely, an early sign of the end of civilisation I recently bought around 1,000 old Edwardian postcards (no one wants them these days - they

Tir 20 mns welt nr book 31%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

cost just a few pounds) and although the addresses consisted of nothing more than {at most) a name, a number, a street and a town, the cards clearly reached their destinations safely There is less mail today because so many people use email - so why does the mail take so much longer to get where it's going?

Is reading a book on a smart phone easier and more fun than reading a paper back - with no need to squint and constantly adjust the position of the screen on a sunny day? Was the NHS better when there was a dental service for all? Were charities more or less inclusive when they served merely to serve those in need rather than to enrich executives and advertising agencies? Was life better when we used public phone boxes instead of having to carry a mobile phone with us? Were radio and television programmes worse when traditional events such as the Promenade Concerts celebrated cultural traditions rather than global ones?

Was the Tate Britain art gallery better when it paid more attention to traditional artists than to the demands of the woke? The Tate Britain gallery now has just one room for art from 1545 to 1640 but 14 rooms devoted to art from 1940 onwards Of the work on view, 200 items were made since the millennium

and the work in the publicly funded gallery has been carefully curated to ensure that men and women are equally represented among living artists — regardless of reputation or the value of their work Modern art on display, representing just a twentieth of the time span of the collection, takes up a quarter of the space Culture, as well as history, has been changed to fit the requirements of the conspirators and the collaborators. Labels attached to older pictures highlight social injustice, colonial exploitation and prejudice The gallery seems to illustrate the way in which the feelings of the few now dominate the views of the many in every sphere of activity

The aims of the WEF and other organisations seem to be to destroy each nation's heritage, to destroy every country's culture In the UK, all major institutions seem to have become very woke The National Trust, the Marylebone Cricket Club and other former institutions are now unrecognisably woke — to the great confusion of long-standing members Long established regiments in the army have disappeared or been merged

The aim of the conspirators is to change the world by erasing nations, families and communities and by destroying everything humans consider to be personal and valuable Immigration (whether legal or illegal) is encouraged in order to

create impoverishment, resentment, racism, terrorism and plenty of excuses for war (Asan aside, it used to be thought that patriotism was good but nattonalism

Ti 19 mins welt np book 31%:

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

was bad Today, however, both are unacceptable because there can be no coun-triesin the New World Order)

Naturally, immigration programmes have led to resentment on both sides and, especially in France, the development of racial and cultural ghettos 1s lead- ing to civil war

22

In this book I will show how the United Nations, the Round Table, Black Lives Matter, the Democrats, the Republicans have destroyed our hives with the con- troversies over gender (with insane gender language changes being introduced with the sole idea of creating confusion and destroying human relationships), transgender politics (also designed to bewilder and create diviston) and exagger- ated campaigns against sexual abuse ('He said my haw looked mice', 'He said he hiked my dress' 'My hfe 1s now ruined') A wolf whistle used to be regarded by most women as a compliment, today it is a criminal offence The conspirators have deliberately created diviston, distrust and fear between the sexes, and the neoliberals who run the global economic system have consistently shown that ther arm ts not to create more fairness, or to advance the rights of women in those countries where unfairness is commonplace, but to create as many di- visions as possible between men and women The atm of the neoliberals who make up the Establishment, and who are pushing us towards their beloved Great Reset, 1s to break up soctety 1n as many ways as possible so as to ensure that men and women are too busy fighting one another to worry about the progress to wards the New World Order Itis for this very same reason that national history and national and regional culture are betng banished from every aspect of life, and why schools and colleges no longer teach students material which could be construed as patriotic or in any way Lkely to lead to preater pride

23

Then there are the absurdly exaggerated accusations of racism, always popular with communists who see such accusations as a way to break down society, with accusations buult on the flimsiest of pretexts ('He couldn't pronounce my name properly and so he 1s a racist' 'He didn't pick me for his team and so he must be a racist') A well- known personality had to issue a grovelling apology after people with too much treme on their hands found that he had once sent a tweet commenting that he perhaps needed to learn another language when he was tn

Tt 19 mins elt nr book 22%

THF AFAR fit, Fl AS

\$ion) and exaggerated campaigns against sexual abuse ('He said my hair looked nice', "He said he liked my dress' My hfe is now ruined') A wolf whistle used to be regarded by most women as 4 comphment, today it 1s 4 criminal offence The conspirators

have deliberately created division, distrust and fear between the sexes, and the neoliberals who run the global economic system have consistently shown that their aim is not to create more fairness or to advance the rights of women in those countries where unfairness is commonplace but to create as many divisions as possible between men and women. The aim of the neoliberals who make up the Establishment, and who are pushing us towards the beloved Great Reset, is to breakup society in as many ways as possible so as to ensure that men and women are too busy fighting one another to worry about the progress towards the New World Order. It is for this very same reason that national history and national and regional culture are being banished from every aspect of life and why schools and colleges no longer teach students material which could be construed as patriotic or in any way likely to lead to greater pride.

are like Tins 'edit with hook

23

Then there are the absurdly exaggerated accusations of racism always popular with communists who see such accusations as a way to break down society with accusations built on the flimsiest of pretexts ('He couldn't pronounce my name properly and so he is racist' 'He didn't pick me for his team and so he must be "« racist') A well-known personality had to issue a grovelling apology after people with too much time on their hands found that he had once sent a tweet commenting that he perhaps needed to learn another language when he was in London. Since most people in London aren't native to England and don't speak English it is all or very well, his remark was well based and logical, But it was wrongly perceived as being racist because the person who saw him as racist had been encouraged to want him to be racist.

The attempts to outlaw racism themselves produce racism, « 5 course with affirmative action and positive discrimination being nothing more than racism of another colour. Appointing a black woman to a company board of directors simply because she is black and female, and helps the company hit its diversity quota, is racist and sexist and just plain wrong. The black woman should

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

In this book I will show how the United Nations, the Round Table, Black Lives Matter, the Democrats, the Republicans have destroyed our lives with the controversies over gender (with insane gender language changes being introduced with the sole idea of creating confusion and destroying human relationships), transgender politics (also designed to bewilder and create division) and exaggerated campaigns against sexual abuse ('He said my hair looked nice', 'He said he liked my dress' 'My life is now ruined') A wolf whistle used to be regarded by most women as a compliment, today it is a criminal offence. The conspirators have deliberately created division, distrust and fear between the sexes, and the neoliberals who run the global economic system have consistently shown that their aim is not to create more fairness, or to advance the rights of women in

those countries where unfairness is commonplace, but to create as many divisions as possible between men and women. The aim of the neoliberals who make up the Establishment, and who are pushing us towards their beloved Great Reset, is to break up society in as many ways as possible so as to ensure that men and women are too busy fighting one another to worry about the progress towards the New World Order. It is for this very same reason that national history and national and regional culture are being banished from every aspect of life, and why schools and colleges no longer teach students material which could be construed as patriotic or in any way likely to lead to greater pride.

23

Then there are the absurdly exaggerated accusations of racism, always popular with communists who see such accusations as a way to break down society, with accusations built on the flimsiest of pretexts ('He couldn't pronounce my name properly and so he is a racist', 'He didn't pick me for his team and so he must be a racist'). A well-known personality had to issue a grovelling apology after people with too much time on their hands found that he had once sent a tweet commenting that he perhaps needed to learn another language when he was in London. Since most people in London aren't native to England and don't speak English at all or very well, his remark was well based and logical. But it was wrongly perceived as being racist because the person who saw it as racist had been encouraged to want it to be racist.

The attempts to outlaw racism themselves produce racism, of course, with affirmative action and positive discrimination being nothing more than racism of another colour. Appointing a black woman to a company board of directors

Ti 19 mins welt np book 22%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

simply because she is black and female, and helps the company hit its diversity quota, is racist and sexist and just plain wrong. The black woman should be appointed because she is the best candidate and will do the best job for employees, shareholders and customers.

Advertisers who show photos of happy couples or families invariably show a black couple or a black man and a white woman (usually a blonde). It is now uncommon to see any white men appearing in print or television advertisements.

This isn't simple political correctness but is done because it enables the advertiser to avoid any accusations that it might be racist. It is virtue signalling and it is actually racist of course.

I read recently of the existence of an 'initiative' in the UK called 'Black Farmer's New Face of Farming' with a range of food products called 'The Black Farmer'. In the United States there is an organisation called Black Farmers' Market. And there are a number of trade organisations along these lines. There is, for example, a National Black Police Association and in London there is the Metropolitan Black Police Association. There is a Black Writers Guild, a Black Writers Society

and a Black Writers' Association. And there is a Black Agents and Editors' Group. I can't help thinking that by defining a group according to skin colour these no

doubt well intended individuals are sustaining and even creating racism And I wonder what the reaction would be if a group of farmers founded an organisation for white farmers Or if a group of white policemen founded an association called the White Police Association I find it difficult to avoid the suspicion that creating racial groups in this way is part of the conspirators' plan to create disharmony in society

In June 2023, it was revealed that the RAF has been practising discrimination against white men 'Discrimination' is, of course, just a polite word for 'racism' If a black man is unfairly treated because of his skin colour it is racism and there is an uproar, sackings and scandal [If a white man is unfairly treated because of his skin colour it is discrimination and no one cares There seems little doubt that if racism is a serious problem in the UK it is white men and women who are most commonly the victims

We see footballers and other sportsmen kneeling in an attempt to show their moral integrity but merely displaying just how easily they can be manipulated They seem to me to be displaying shallow fake compassion and their own propensity for virtue signalling When it comes to the crunch, however, the sportsmen seem sadly short of moral courage At the World Football Cup in

Twitter is well over 33%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Qatar, for example, male footballers bravely announced that they would wear a rainbow armband during the tournament to show their support for homosexuals (For unknown reasons, homosexuals have stolen the rainbow, long a Christian symbol, as an emblem And homosexuality is outlawed in Qatar One might have thought that a better and more fitting way of expressing their feelings would have been to refuse to go to Qatar at all) However, when the organisers announced that footballers wearing rainbow armbands would be sanctioned, the footballers all abandoned their enthusiasm and put away their rainbow armbands

24

The Bank of England (which is responsible for making a mess of the English economy and failing to control inflation) has said that people of any 'gender identity' (I think they mean men or women but who knows) can be treated as pregnant And the Bank is having some gender-neutral lavatories built so that lady bankers and gentlemen bankers who aren't sure of their gender identity can go to the loo together and share the experience in politically correct harmony The Bank's insane pregnancy policies mean that anyone can now be classified as a birthing parent and claim family leave from the bank, | bet there are some people facing 7% mortgages who wish the Bank would concentrate on inflation and worry a little more about the economy and a little less about showing how woke it is

There are endless attacks on masculinity and femininity with constant pressure towards unisex washrooms and a unisex world We can only stand and watch the banishing of the family unit and the use of the State as a central factor in our lives, the prejudice and dishonesty of the mainstream media (which now seems to specialise in misinformation and disinformation and rarely if

ever, reports the news without a built in judgemental commentary), the use of homosexuality and the remainder of the specialities within the LGBTQIA community (I tried to find out what the Q, the ! and the A stand for but failed in this simple task No one I spoke to knew the answer, and even the internet was unable to provide an answer)

It used to be considered polite for a man to offer a co-worker or friend a compliment (‘Your hair looks nice’, ‘That dress suits you’ and so on) without any one being offended Indeed, if the compliment were a genuine one the recipient would be pleased and flattered Today, such remarks are considered to be signs

Tia VT? ns welt np book 33%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

of extreme sexist behaviour and men have been fired for saying such things and branded as sex offenders It is even now considered sexist for a man to stand up on public transport and to offer his seat to a woman, or to allow a woman to proceed before him through a doorway (Ironically, men may sometimes be accused of being rude for not doing these things.)

And, of course, those promoting women’s professional sport are insisting that as much attention be given to female football and cricket teams as to the more traditional male teams Huge amounts of money are being funnelled into female sport even though the evidence clearly shows that there is very little spectator interest in matches played between women’s teams or indeed when individual women play sports (women have been playing professional tennis and golf for decades but the interest in their games has always been minute when compared with the interest in male versions of those games) The media, as always, has been supine and some newspapers now give more coverage to women’s sports than to men’s sports with the result that their readers find it nigh on impossible to navigate their pages A casual reader will see a headline that screams ‘England World Cup Triumph’ and will find themselves reading about the success of a team of 14-year-old girls playing lacrosse or netball

Once again, there is a hidden agenda

Promoting and encouraging sexism encourages conflict and confusion - two

essential building blocks regarded as essential for pushing us into the Great Reset And new rules about ‘equality, diversity and inclusion’ have replaced humanity, goodwill and kindness with statutory obligations, statutory whingeing and statutory recriminations The rules about diversity, inclusion and equality are doing far more harm than good. You can’t regulate for kindness

Something called the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (commissioned by the England and Wales Cricket Board in a mood of self-flagellation) caused a storm (and a good many headlines) by complaining that racism, sexism, classism and elitism are widespread in the game of cricket.

I’ve been following cricket all my life I have spent a huge chunk of my life on cricket grounds I’ve spoken to many cricketers And I’ve been inside professional dressing rooms as a doctor I’ve written four books on cricket (including The Village Cricket Tour and Thomas Winsden’s Cricketing Almanack) and I’ve

written a column and articles for specialist cricket magazines And I believe the ICEC report will do far more harm than good

Tia VT? ns welt np book 34%:

THEIR “ERR FLYING PLAN

But I wasn't in the slightest surprised by its conclusions The death of cricket has been on the cards for some time After all, some of those involved with the dangerously fascist Great Reset, the climate change myth and the absurd re-wilding nonsense want to stop all sport because it takes up too much space and involves travel

To me the ECB's report stinks of woke gibberish
Equity in cricket, for heaven's sake That's a real ESG word
The woman who was chairman of the committee is described as having ex-

perience in 'governance, inclusion and equity'

What a surprise

A woman described as a senior independent director of the ECB said 'Promot-

ing equity, diversity and inclusion across the game is critical to the success of our game-wide strategy Inspiring Generations and our purpose of connecting com-

munities through cricket'

Rishi Sunak, a well-known war criminal, took time off from sending depleted

uranium shells to Ukraine to get in touch with the ECB. He wants cricket to be inclusive and open to everybody [actually rather thought it was Even blind people play cricket

I think they've all missed the point (If I'm allowed to have a view on this - which I rather fear may not be the case these days)

Cricket isn't a social programme or an experiment in human resources

Cricket is a game Or I thought it was

If people want to play they play If they want to watch they watch If people

from some areas of society aren't interested then that's fine There are plenty of other games they can play Cricket doesn't exist to change society and lead us into the Great Reset

The report makes it look as if cricket had huge problems

I don't believe it does

At least, I don't think it did

I think this report could create some very big problems and it is my belief it

could do more harm than good

They won't agree with me, of course, but I fear this report will exacerbate sus-

picious, paranoia, resentment and entitlement and actually create racism

If you look at tennis, rugby, football, gymnastics, chess, dominoes or syn-

chronised swimming through the same distorting spectacles, you could claim they all have problems There are far more black players in top level professional

Tia 15 ms elt np book 35%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

football than makes statistical sense How many black tennis players are there in local tennis clubs? How many Mushm women are there involved in synchronised swimming? Enough? Not enough? Too many? Who decides?

The report says that there must be a 'fundamental overhaul of the women's pay structure in order to achieve parity with the men's game'

I'm terribly sorry, (and this really isn't a sexist comment, it's a realistic comment) but that is like saying that the members of the chorus in an opera should be paid the same as the lead tenor and soprano

Look at the stands when women are playing There are huge empty spaces If women are to be paid the same as men then the men will have to take a huge

pay cut There certainly isn't enough money in the sport to pay men and women the same as the men currently receive

The report says that Black cricket has not been adequately supported Black cricket?

I thought teams had black and white players together Gordon Greenidge and

Barry Richards were probably the greatest opening partnership in history One was black and one was white

Are we now going to have black teams and white teams?

The report says that 'cricket needs to have a clear set of values'

No it doesn't need a set of artificially created values

Cricket needs some laws Which it has And it needs players to play the game

fairly and honourably Which they mostly do That's where the phrase 'it's not cricket' came from

What on earth do they mean anyway?

The 317-page report says that costs are prohibitive

Really?

Have they looked at the costs of getting started in motor racing or horse jump-

ing? Or skiing? Or yachting?

Do they want taxpayers to provide every child with a free bat and ball?

Kids who want to play cricket need an old tennis ball, a piece of wood and a

lamp-post on which to chalk the wickets And someone to play with

And look at this quote from Ben Stokes, the England cricket captain, made

after the absurd and damaging report was made public 'I am Ben Stokes, born in

New Zealand, a state educated pupil who dropped out of school at 16 with one GCSE in PE I needed help with the spelling and grammar in this speech and! am sitting here as the England men's Test captain

Tiu 1S nes tel nr book 35%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAW

Elitismmm?

Where ts the elitism?

The truth about cricket is that most of the people who play it and watch it are

rather decent They don't play or watch to change society They play or watch because it's fun They enjoy it And the last thing most people think about ts skin colour

It isn't the fault of cncket that the money grubbers sold the TV nghts to a satellite TV company - thereby ensuring that kids don't watch tt and aren't interested in playing

It isn't the fault of ertcket that local authority schools don't play much cricket That's because local councils sold off the playing fields to developers.

There's sexism, racism and old-fashioned snobbery 1m all corners of life But cricket isn't any worse than anywhere else though | admit there isn't a

Test sertes for transgender cricketers and there obviously should be This accusatory and adversarial report commissioned by the ECB seems to me

to be full of modern 'Great Reset' language mtersectionalhity and cisgender make an appearance, of course

The report apparently crictises the fact that some who watch cricket don't like drums being played all day long Well if I watch cricket I rather hke st to be a peaceful activity Is that now a race crime? Drums and impromptu bands and noisy behaviour should be banned May I say that, please?

And the report criticises the huge number of cncket followers who dislike the Hundred — which ts a daft form of biff bat cricket rather too symuilar to French cricket for my tastes I want the Hundred (whichis, [believe, destroying county cricket) ta be forgotten about Am [allowed to say that?

Are we now to be told what sort of cricket we can enjoy?

Oh, and the report talks about Type K' individuals

'Type k' people are, apparently 'white men, educated 1n private schools, who

are straight and cisgender and do not have a disabihty'

I would like to think that this utterly awful report will go straight into the bin

And the ECB which commissioned the report should also go in the bin

But they won't

I fear that 'action' will be taken and the death of cncket will get ever closer

Cricket has been painfully woke for some years now The annual Wisden

seems to have become woke And I think the MCC is pretty woke too

Pt 14 uses tel ir book 26%

THEIR “ERR FLYING PLAN

And, thanks to this report, I suspect that things are now going to get much worse

The overall plan, espoused by the climate change enthusiasts, is to stop all sport - both amateur and professional - because it takes up land which they believe should be used for rewilding and because it involves travel

25

The project known as Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a dangerous and enormously damaging form of woke capitalism, which is used as a weapon by governments, banks and regulators and even promoted with religious fervour by brokers, analysts and financial journalists ESG is, without a doubt, doing far more harm than good and is part of the conspirators’ plan to ensure that ‘we own nothing’

Larry Fink, the chairman and chief executive of BlackRock (which is an investment company) says, rather bizarrely, that ‘access to capital is not a right It is a privilege’ and has warned that corporate ‘behaviours are going to have to change, and this is one thing we are asking companies, you have to force behaviours and at BlackRock we are forcing behaviours’

Fink is not a politician or an elected official but the company he runs has control of trillions of dollars’ worth of investments His role as a money manager means that he has a fiduciary responsibility to those whose money he looks after

Fink's outrageous arrogance and hubristic determination to claim power beyond reason has, fortunately, aroused some opposition from those who don't accept that Mr Fink has the right to bully the directors and staff of other companies or to take decisions on behalf of shareholders In Florida, US, the Governor, Ron DeSantis, has signed into law a bill which prohibits state officials in Florida from investing public money to achieve ESG goals

Meanwhile, outside Florida, those who doubt or question ESG are cancelled and likely to lose their credit rating Corporate doubters will be excluded from bond markets and forced onto the fringe of corporate society The three biggest credit rating agencies have added ESG ratings to their portfolios, and so every company in the world has to obey the demands of the ESG enthusiasts Companies which produce hydrocarbons (such as oil companies) have great difficulty in borrowing money and shareholders have lost their rights as company owners

Tu 13 uses elt nr book 3 7N\z

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Fink believes that climate change is real (despite the evidence that it is not), that children in kindergarten schools should be taught about sex, including homosexuality (despite the opposition of many parents), and that everyone (boy or girl) should be free to use whichever sex they prefer (despite the opposition of almost everyone of both sexes)

Fink appears to believe that companies should ignore their shareholders and adopt something called stakeholder capitalism —something which means giving power to lobby groups and elites and creating a new form of socialism whereby other people's money is distributed to the poor and used to pursue the policies Fink feels are most important. In order to ensure that his policies are followed, Fink pushes through changes in company policy, and by bullying and pushing hard to promote his pet theories, ensures that boards of directors include members with extremist views (Anyone with investments might like to consider Fink's attitude when deciding whether or not to allow BlackRock to manage their investments)

Fink isn't quite alone in his determination to take over the world, of course Michael Bloomberg, another extremely arrogant fellow, and a man who runs a financial media company which provides news for most of corporate America, seems to have similar aims, and both men could not unreasonably be described as being egotistical, narcissistic and megalomaniacal Two men with but one Napoleon complex Another man with similar enthusiasms, Doctoroff, is Bloomberg's media boss And some, at least, of these views seem to be shared by Hank Paulson, a former boss of Goldman Sachs and Tom Steyer, a hedge fund billionaire

Bloomberg is also much convinced by the fake climate change industry and has provided free prosecutors to sue energy companies if he doesn't like them

By pushing their propaganda very widely, these people have massive influence on climate science researchers and they influence the multi billion dollar a year climate industry

Sadly for Fink and Bloomberg, a growing number of experts are prepared to speak out and tell the truth about subjects such as climate change 'Dodgy science published by climate advocacy groups is certainly not uncommon,' said Roger Pielke, a Professor at University of Colorado And Warren Buffett, the legendary investor has also expressed scepticism The evidence shows that the: illogical obsession with Net Zero will lead to billions of deaths from disease, starvation and other preventable problems

Tu 13 mins welt nr book 37%

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

Screen not saved
laoio vk your screg1ghot

26 SHORE = EDIT. ~—sDELEL

Starvation is being created quite adequately as part of the plan to reduce the world's population

Encouraged by cultist-controlled politicians, vast quantities of the world's crops of corn, soy bean and so on, are being used to make biofuels so that motorists can continue to buy cheap petrol for their motor cars. A while ago, a list of 51 things you and I can do to prevent global warming was published. Number 1 on their list was headed 'Turn food into fuel'. This, it was claimed, would have a 'high impact' on the global warming problem. It was suggested that ethanol is the alternative fuel that 'could finally wean the US from its expensive oil habit and may turn prevent the millions of tons of carbon emissions that go with it'.

This is dangerous nonsense. When more land is used to grow biofuels, so that 'green' motorists can drive around feeling virtuous, there is less land for growing food and an increase in the number of people starving to death.

The demand for biofuels has been soaring for years (despite the knowledge that, as a result, people are starving) and the increased use of biofuel is a major force behind the rise of food prices. If greens keep promoting biofuels then there is going to be a global shortage of food and millions are going to die as a result.

There are other problems with our food supplies, of course. Big American seed companies have been busy patenting the rights to many

individual seeds. They have done this so that they can force farmers around the world to buy their products. One result has been that small farmers in India are no longer allowed to grow seeds from crops that their families have been planting for generations. If they do, then lawyers for American multinationals will smother them with writs and injunctions.

As a result, the incidence of suicide among small farmers in developing countries is alarmingly high.

Finally, large modern farms are remarkably (and surprisingly) inefficient. When the fuel used to build tractors, make fertilisers and pesticides and so on is taken into account, it turns out that the energy cost of a kilogram of corn has actually risen in the last few decades. Soil erosion, the loss of pollinators (such as bees) who have been killed by chemicals, evolving chemical resistance by pests and numerous other environmental problems have also reduced farm crops.

That is not to say that the book is 34%

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

The result of all this is that food is becoming scarce and prices are rising. This is not a cyclical change (with prices falling or rising due to changes in the weather). It is a structural change and, I fear, permanent.

As far as food prices are concerned, the conditions really are optimum for a 'perfect storm'. At first glance it appears that things really couldn't get much worse.

But, actually, they could.

American genetic engineers have been 'modifying' food for years to make it

more profitable No one knows what effect their modifications will have on the safety of food for human consumption No one knows what other horrendous side effects there might be The msk's are unbekevably dangerous So, for example, if every farmer in the world grows the same 'brand' of potato and that potato is hit by a deadly disease then there won't be any potatoes

For those in Europe and America all this is not yet critical
But for those in many other parts of the world this is already an outright

disaster In some countries nearly half of all children are malnourished And things are getting worse and will continue to get worse Rising prices and falling quantities of food available for eating (as opposed to filling petrol tanks) will result in massive starvation around the world The fake coronavirus hoax, and the consequent economic problems which will devastate economies everywhere, will exacerbate the problem As a result, the incidence of global starvation is set to rocket

It's no good saying that the planet isn't overcrowded (it isn't) or that there is plenty of food (there is), for the inescapable fact is that as a result of policies controlled by international organisations controlled by the United States of America, at least five million infants and small children die each year ~ in a good year That figure is set to rocket in India, Nigeria and the Congo and elsewhere The number of people in extreme poverty around the world could soon double to over 200 million

Increasing agricultural production enabled the world to grow from 1.7 billion people to nearly 7 billion people in just a century But when the oil runs out, the world will not be able to feed that many people The oil is needed for farming as well as for transport

The racist and elitist policies of the climate change enthusiasts who want us to stop using oil will, if they are successful, be responsible for billions of deaths

Tea TT nes elt nr book 30%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

The billionaires assume that they know best about everything (because they are rich) and that the end always justifies the means Their arrogance has also helped them become ever richer In the last two decades billions of dollars have moved from the middle classes to the billionaire classes Real wages have been falling and the value of savings, investments and pensions has fallen steadily while the billionaires such as Fink and Bloomberg have got ever richer It is difficult to avoid the feeling that Fink and Bloomberg have for years now been on a very effective mission to destroy America from within

The unavoidable truth is that everything needs energy and without energy everything stops The climate change believers have pushed energy costs ever higher and if they are able to understand even the simplest scientific evidence, they must know that renewables will never replace carbon based fuels However, it is largely thanks to the efforts of Fink, Bloomberg and their billionaire colleagues that capital spending on fossil fuels has fallen dramatically and fuel production has dropped 30% since 2020

27

The wilful destruction of pensions through absurd political shenanigans, the monstrous nonsenses known as diversity and sustainability, the rise in the power of the central banks and the Bank for International Settlements are all closely linked, all carefully designed, and all have exactly the same long-term aim a World Government and a global population of serfs (with the World Government almost certain to have its parliament building in Israel which may be one of the most unstable and aggressive countries on earth but which is also the physical or spiritual home of many of those leading the demand for a Great Reset and a World Government controlled by and for bankers and billionaires) Incidentally, civil servants and those with publicly funded pensions might think that their retirement is well-funded because they have been promised good pensions I'm afraid that they are deluding themselves No publicly funded pension is safe

28

The illiterates, the truth deniers, the conspirators and the collaborators have invented a language of their own By looking for their favourite words you can easily identify the conspiratorial globalists

Tia Tinswelt is back 39%:

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

And so here are their favourite words If you see more than two of these words in any document then you know you are dealing with a conspirator You should be aware and wary

Collaboration The conspirators love to pretend that they are part of a big, happy family of individuals who have seen they are right In fact, of course, they are collaborators in the way that thugs who set fire to a tramp in the street are collaborators

Sustainable This is probably their favourite word They can't usually manage a paragraph without using it at least once Everything has to be sustainable

Resilient They use this word a good deal when talking about risk management

Leadership The collaborators like to think that they all have leadership qualities They don't have any leadership qualities, of course, and so they use the word a good deal when describing themselves and their colleagues The words 'common purpose' are also popular among those who consider they are following the 'play book' (The illiterates are also very keen on 'toolkits' and 'group think' though none of them has the foggiest what these mean.)

Impact They use this word to show the effect of one of their social engineering programmes

Denier They use this word to describe anyone who does not share their insanity It is used as a term of abuse If they call you a denier you should be proud

Inclusive The collaborators love to feel that they are inclusive They are fans of forced homogenisation They believe in mixed looses and mixed sports teams because these are a true sign of inclusivity They like to subordinate individual rights to the rights of the community

Equity The conspirators are huge fans of the redistribution of resources - as long as they get more of whatever there is than anyone else It is through their enthusiasm for 'equity' that the collaborators show their allegiance to the communist cause They also like to move towards the standardisation of everything

Diversity They love this word even more than they love the concept. Everything must be diverse They believe in the deliberate and steadfast disruption of what they call 'organic patterns of association' If you want to imitate one of the globalists just talk about diversity and sustainability

Transparency The globalists are firm believers in transparency when it comes to other people They are, for example, enthusiastic supporters of 'track

Tia 10 mins elt nr book 40%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

and trace' But they are not as keen about transparency when it comes to themselves and their own dirty deeds

The conspirators and collaborators are also desperately enthusiastic about accountability as far as it relates to other people They always like to create permanent digital records of everything other people do They insist that everyone (except themselves) should be accountable for their actions They themselves steadfastly refuse to debate the value of what they do

Innovative They love this word because it makes them seem original and creative Sadly, of course, none of them has ever had a single original or creative thought They prefer to follow the playbook devised by Schwab and the other leaders of the Nutter Movement They talk a good deal about the Fourth Industrial Revolution because this makes them sound like intellectuals. (Naturally, most of them have no idea what it means and didn't even know there were three other industrial revolutions until last week)

There are other words to look out for, of course Words such as 'predictive' 'profiling' and standardisation' invariably crop up at least once in every document they produce And remember too, of course, that the illiterati who believe in global warming and the Great Reset regard a document of 500 pages as a short note

29

The battle between individualism (the essence of humanity and freedom) and collectivism is vast and continuous The collectivists are enthusiastic promoters

of mass vaccination programmes which are offered not to protect individuals but to protect communities, with no scientific evidence that they do either and much evidence that they do lasting harm We are being moved towards a four day week (at most), job sharing, working from home (guaranteed to reduce pro-

ductivity) and, as jobs become scarce and people decide they don't want them any way, a State paid for, State sponsored, State selected universal basic income Everything that is being done to oppress and suppress us is promoted and protected by, it seems, all the world's lobbyists, pressure groups and self-appointed fact checkers

30

The quickest and easiest way to become mch these days is to set up a fact checking company You can easily persuade huge companies to hire you to 'fact

Ti 10 mins welt ni book 40%:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

check' anyone telling the truth | have investigated a number of fact checkers specialising in scientific matters and found that none of them had any relevant qualifications and all of the ones I found merely labelled anything which contradicted the conspirators' official line as 'fake news'

Describing yourself as a 'fact checker' is one of the quickest way toriches these days because there are many large organisations which are ever eager to hire fact checkers and are, seemingly, unconcerned about the qualhfications (or lack of) of the individuals concerned I decided that the word 'deception' is the collective term for fact checkers as in 'a deception of fact checkers'

One of the fact checkers I encountered (by accident rather than design) was someone called Dave who edited a website called Media Bias Fact Check Dave described his site as 'the most comprehensive media bias resource on the internet' He claimed to have five volunteers to help him and admitted that none of his teatn was a professional journalist Dave said he 'currently works full time in the health care industry' though he didn't say whether he was a bratn surgeon or a hospital car park attendant or a drug company sales representative He described himself as an armchair researcher and boasted that his website had been used as a resource by BBC News, among many other media organisations

I found that like most fact checkers, Dave was quick to describe videos and articles as 'FALSE' (fact checkers always put that word im capital letters, as though it has more gravitas that way) or as containing 'misinformation', even though everything mn a video or article had been thoroughly and professionally researched

When I examined his fact-checking site, Dave appeared to have based his judgement on matenal which appeared on a site called Politifact which itself contains errors They said I had a Facebook video But I have never had a Facebook account They said that m 2019 I authored a book aimed at discrediting trustin vaccmes That's not true either (The only book on vaccines which | have written was published m 2011 andit was aimed at providing readers with facts) They report that there is no clear evidence that the coronavirus vaccines have killed or will kill anyone I don't thinkI'm the only doctor in the world to disagree with that Indeed, how can anyone write that a drug will never kill anyone?

Another fact checker claims they wrote to me c/o the emazl address on my website There ts no email address on my website

Toe SD rries Fee nt seek 41%:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

Dave didn't lke another video of mine called 'Doctors and Nurses giving the covid 19 vaccine will be tried as war cnmuinals' He iabelled that one FALSE, based on yet another fact checker called Lead Stones

The problem with that judgement is that the exghth word of the title of the video is 'wall', suggesting that something is going to happen in the future It is, of course, impossible to label such a judgement as false unless you have direct access to the future

31

Progress in terms of people getting richer relies on productivity going up but the opposite has happened in recent years Inflation, soaring taxes, lockdown mentality, working from home and other factors are pushing people into giving up indespair Milhons now choose to hve on benefits, retire and take their pension early, or choose to be classified as long term sick and give up work for the rest of their lives In the UK there are, as] write in the summer of 2023, four or five mullton people classtfied as long term sick - people who are officially allowed to remain off work for the rest of their lives (Precise figures are always difficult to obtain from governments but when figures are offered they are invariably massively underestimated)

32

By the summer of 2023 there was some belated discussion in the press about whether lockdowns had helped prevent the spread of covid. In fact there is no doubt that the lockdowns made the situation considerably worse and were responsible, as I predicted when they were first rntroduced, for hundreds of thousands of deaths

What is lgnored, however, ts that the lockdowns were not introduced to stop the spread of covid 19 The lockdowns were introduced as a form of comphance traring Their subsidiary arm was to make people so lonely and despairing that would be ready to grab at any solution And the solution, of course, was the toxic and experimental covid-19 vaccination

33

The innocent and the narve beheve that everythme is happening by accident Farmers around the world seem constantly bewildered and confused by pohctes and decisions which are designed to please the enthusiasts, calling for the

Tn So erniris Fede nt seek 41%:

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

closure of farms 1n order to appease the psychopaths calling for net zero In an artucle in a Bntish magazine {which, like others, seems to have fallen for the Green myths with all the mindless commitment of a teenager 1n love) one leading Green academic recently said 'Farming has no option - It will have to be sustainable otherwise it will not be sustained' and there were doubtless many Green heads nodding though I confess I was merely left puzzled

Confused farmers describe new government policies as vindictive, senseless, cruel, destructive, insane, bureaucratic, dangerous and just plain bewildering. Farmers are encouraged to follow 'biodynamic' farming methods whereby herbal and mineral preparations are used together with an astronomical calendar to guide sowing and harvesting dates (I'm not kidding). Nowhere is there more incomprehensible jargon than there now is intruding into the world of farming. Many farmers have been pressured into supporting the absurd re-wilding programme which is promoted with such enthusiasm by the climate change believers. The conspirators' plans to reduce the amount of land available for growing food in order to create food shortages, starvation and a consequent, inevitable reduction in the size of the global population. The aim is to allow between a third and a half of all land to go wild. Even parks are being allowed to grow wild, and gardeners are encouraged to let their grass grow throughout the summer. Re-wilding is leading to grass being left long and uncut on verges, in public places and private gardens.

So what's the underlying reason? (They always have a reason). Well, long and uncut grass will dramatically increase the spread of ticks and the incidence of Lyme Disease. It will also increase the number of people bitten by adders. If you don't see an adder and you tread on it then it will probably bite you. And all that long grass will dramatically increase the amount of hay-fever. Plus, long, uncut grass on road verges and traffic islands makes road accidents far more likely. Re-wilding is part of the plan to make everyone miserable, ruin everyone's health, make money for the drug companies and kill a few people.

In order to ensure that neither farmers nor members of the public encroach on land which has been set aside for rewilding (and the first re-wilding programme was introduced by the European Union some years ago in a scheme which was called 'set aside') wild animals are being released. In England, for example, bison, water buffalo, wild boar and beavers have been introduced with predictably disastrous results. The naive assume that if land is left uncared for, fields will become wild flower meadows, full of daisies, tulips, forget-me-nots,

The PF orrnis Lee np seek 42%

THEIR REWILDING PLAN

snapdragons, violets and other wonderful delights. In reality, of course, fields which are abandoned to the re-wilding scheme simply become a chaotic and unpleasant mixture of nettles, brambles, dock and giant hogweed with outbreaks of Japanese knotweed growing rapidly over the years to come.

Today, most farmers see their problems occurring as a result of stupidity, ignorance or a failure to understand their needs. But what is happening to them is nothing to do with stupidity, ignorance or a failure to understand — it's all deliberate and quite cold blooded. More and more European countries are now dependent on imports for most of their food and energy supplies.

The bottom line, vital to remember, is that nothing is happening by accident or by coincidence.

The same things are happening in all industries and all professions but because people tend to see only their own small area of activity most don't realise

that their confusion, their own horror story, is part of a wider pattern that affects all industries, most professions and all nations. The patient who spends two years on a waiting list for surgery is suffering (and probably unable to work) not by accident but by design. The traveller whose journey is disrupted by delays and strikes is suffering because of planned delays and well-organised strikes. The parents whose child is not being properly educated should understand that the educational system isn't failing by accident but by design. We all need to see everything that is happening as a part of a plan, rather than as a series of isolated incidents. My purpose in writing this book is to put everything in context and to enable the reader to see things in perspective, and later in the book I will explain how we got here and who is responsible. There is a greater plan, the plan for the Great Reset, and it is being executed with military precision.

34

And then, inevitably, came the designer war, ostensibly between Russia and Ukraine but in reality between America and its NATO satellites and Russia.

It is clear that President Putin didn't want to sell his country to the American juggernaut, driven by the conspirators, and that was enough to mark him as an enemy. It also seems clear that NATO and Russia were involved in a battle to decide which of them would control the world government which both of them are expecting. NATO and Russia were playing a massive game of Monopoly, with the prize being control of much of the world's resources rather than the rent on a few

Take Germany and not seek 43%

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

wooden houses and the penalty being almost complete annihilation rather than a request to pay £200 to the bank and an instruction not to go past 'GO'

Everything bad that happens has been deliberately organised by American politicians and bankers. What we are seeing now is a culmination of a process which started well over 100 years ago and is now rapidly approaching fulfilment. We now live in a world where bankers, who produce nothing, who are of no real value to society and who unquestionably do far more harm than good, control the world's money.

35

Today's problems aren't caused by the fact that 1% of the population controls most of the world's property and wealth but by the fact that the 99% are, through their mortgages and bank loans, in debt to the 1% and many will spend their lives working to pay off those mortgages or loans and, at the end of their lives, end up no richer than they were to start with. The 1% (or, in fact, considerably less than 1% but I'll stick to calling them the 1% because it's a simple way to describe them) have taken control of the 99% because, to put it bluntly, they own them. The 1% has sucked the world dry of money. They control everything. They control natural resources, they control finance, they control the politicians, they control the judiciary, they control the police, they control health care and they control the military. Globally, they have virtually total control over organisations such as the United Nations (and its subsidiaries such as the World Health Organisation), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Any dissent that appears at the top is contrived and artificial. The 1%, the conspirators,

may sometimes appear to be at war with a government or an administrative body or an NGO but they are never at war with anything or anyone because they control everything and everyone The 1% controls the protestors Black Lives Matter, climate change groups and mobs smashing store windows are all financed by the billionaire financiers

36

Nothing is at it appears to be and nothing, for sure, is as the media would have us believe Everything you read, see or hear courtesy of the mainstream media is a lie For example, the mainstream media around the world insisted that Russia had destroyed its own Nord Stream pipeline even though there was excellent evidence that the pipeline had been destroyed by the Americans - whose president

Trump is able to see 43%

THEIR ERRONEOUS PLAN

had, indeed, boasted that the pipeline would be destroyed There was of course no logical reason for the Russians to destroy an enormously expensive pipeline, and if they did want to stop the flow of gas to Germany they could have merely turned off the supply When the Kakhovskaya hydroelectric dam was destroyed, the BBC's first reaction was to blame the Russians, even though there was, once

again, no logical reason why the Russians should destroy a dam which was providing water for much of Crimea and was essential for the functioning and safety of their own nuclear power station Moreover the area beneath the damaged dam was largely occupied by Russians All the evidence showed that it was Ukraine which benefited from the dam's destruction Even after Russia had accused Ukraine of destroying the dam, the mainstream media continued to blame Russia, with most mainstream outlets refusing even to mention the far more likely possibility

Modern, Western societies were originally designed to stop anyone taking control The legislative branch of government was kept separate from the other branches simply so that all the power would not be in the hands of the few But the 1% has changed all that Moreover, the 1% has achieved this position simply by manipulating the money and by using the money to control the politicians I wonder how many people know, for example, that after the banking collapse of 2008, which started in the US and became global, it was American President Obama who decided not to prosecute any of the bankers who had created the crash It was President Obama, a Democrat ostensibly representing the ordinary men and women of America, who defended the bankers, who insisted that the millions of people who lost their homes should not be bailed out and who arranged for bankers such as Goldman Sachs and J P Morgan to be bailed out with billions of dollars of taxpayers' money Furthermore, it was President Obama who allowed the bankers to use the bail-outs to give themselves huge bonuses And yet the mass of people still revere Obama, the great betrayer, and regard him as a hero (The banks were presumably grateful and it is, of course, merely a coincidence that former President Obama became strangely wealthy after his term as President came to an end)

37

Democracy (once described as the tyranny of the majority and abhorred by

Socrates, Plato and Anstotle) has, hke much else, been weapomsed and a new breed of woke tndividuals (who believe they are exhibiting compassion which,

TS eres Lede np ack 44%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

in truth, they neither feel nor understand) show a sense of reverence for the spiritual trammings of the State that marks them out as being indistrnguishable from the brain-washed followers of Mao Tse Tung. They are just as blind to truth, decency and respect as the commuted followers of any dictator in any totalitar-1an regime must be

All these things, and many more, were and are connected by a long-running conspiracy of bankers, polrtiicians and assorted billionaires, a long running, deep seated conspiracy which this book exposes and defines in great depth and detaal

Today, there ts an understandable inclination to regard the fake coronavirus pandemic that was used to bring in lockdowns, social distancing, mask wearing and pseudo-vaccines, as the start of the troubles which are destroying our world and taking away all vestiges of our freedom and humanity

But all that has been nothing more than an exercise m compliance traimmg designed to ternfy, to subdue and to force billions to forget everything they know, to ignore all truths, however blatant, to set aside all natural suspicions, and to become obedient serfs What has been happening 1n the last three years (the fake plague, the nonsense of net zero and all the accompanying restrictions, the beginning of World War III) is merely the culmination of something that started many decades ago

Everything ts hotting up because the conspirators, the very few men and women who are behind everything that is happening, can smell the fear and taste the blood, they know that the mass of people are broken and can easily be controlled They know too that this 1s their moment, 1f they pause or hes1-tate then they are lost and it will be decades, at least, before they have another chance

When we are afraid we do not think properly and when the fear becomes chronic our ability to think clearly is suspended more or less permanently We have been manipulated and groomed for decades, trained to be fearful The threat of the nuclear bomb, a range of threatened infectious diseases (starting with the wildly exaggerated threat of AIDS), constant wars around the globe, the madness of the wildly exaggerated threats that the world will end in five years, ten years, fifteen years or whatever because of the non-existent threat of non-existent clyumate change, endless over-promoted distractions, accusations of racism, sexism and so on — all these have created fear, depression and increas-ting despair Just as Carl Jung had predicted, the State has taken the place of God

Tosh Qo rrniris Lele np ak 44%

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

The conspirators know that people m fear need and demand someone to take

control. Adults become like children, requiring authority and tolerating surveillance that would otherwise be regarded as intrusive. People become ready to sneak and snitch on their fellows. The most absurd instructions are followed without question. And so, because of the threat of an unimaginatively marketed flu, the elderly were locked in care homes for years, and relatives were only allowed to see them through glass. Vaccination programmes were promoted with bizarre incentives (in America it was possible to win \$5 million if you agreed to be vaccinated, and free beer and free doughnuts were given to those who had been jabbed). Celebrities offered abuse to those who questioned the need for the vaccination programme. The Queen of England and the rest of her family exhorted everyone to be jabbed. The Archbishop of Canterbury promised that those who were jabbed would be loved by Jesus (and, presumably, those who didn't get vaccinated wouldn't be loved). The BBC told the public that the covid-19 vaccine was safe and effective - though the medical evidence at the time showed clearly that the vaccine was neither of these things and the assurances were offered without any scientific background.

The truth is that the vaccine damages immune systems, making those who have had it more likely to catch (and die from) other infections. And will the covid-19 jab affect the fertility of those who had it? It seems very likely. Cancer rates are rising rapidly among those who agreed to be vaccinated. It was clear in the autumn of 2020 that the covid-19 jab would be neither safe nor effective, and today there is now no doubt the covid jab is a killer, fake vaccine - useless but far more dangerous than depleted uranium shells or cluster bombs. Like bombs, rockets and bullets, its only conceivable purpose is to kill people.

The evidence showing that the over-promoted, over-sold covid-19 jab is the most dangerous pharmaceutical product ever used is denied only by fools or shills for the conspirators and the drug industry. I have repeatedly warned that the covid jab can and does cause or exacerbate a huge range of serious health problems - including heart disease, clotting problems and cancer. And as I warned in 2020, the immune system problems caused by the 'vaccine' are deadly.

The evidence suggesting that the covid vaccine is toxic is overwhelming and should be banned is constantly growing. Any other product known to cause such severe problems would have been taken off the market a long time ago.

Tia 3 crisis felt in 45%

THEIR ERRONEOUS PLAN

A review of 325 autopsies on patients who died after covid vaccination showed that 74% of the deaths were caused by the covid vaccine.

The nine eminent authors of the paper found that the organ systems most likely to be involved in covid jab deaths were cardiovascular system, haematological system and respiratory system. The mean time between vaccination to death was 14.3 days. A total of 240 deaths out of the 325 deaths were independently adjudicated as directly due to or significantly contributed to by covid-19 vaccinations.

The nine authors concluded 'The consistency seen among cases in this

review with known covid-19 vaccine adverse effects, their mechanisms and related excess deaths, coupled with autopsy confirmation and physician-led death adjudication, suggests there is a high likelihood of a causal link between covid 19 vaccines and death in most cases. Further urgent investigation is required for the purpose of clarifying our findings.

Then there was the paper which appeared in the British Journal of General Practice recently which showed that 'enlargement of axillary, supraclavicular or cervical lymph nodes following vaccination with covid 19 mRNA vaccines is more frequent than initially reported, with a rate reaching up to 16% following the second dose of the Moderna mRNA vaccine'. The paper also reported that a few cases of lymphoma were reported in the literature.

The authors warned that doctors in charge of patients with post-vaccination lymphadenopathy should be reminded to consider the possibility of an underlying or comorbid malignant disorder. The truth, of course, is that there aren't enough doctors around to check fully 16% of all the patients who have a second dose of that vaccine.

The covid jab is causing one problem after another. And the problems are ignored or suppressed by the medical establishment.

In July 2023, it showed that the covid-19 jab was responsible for a surge in type 1 diabetes among children and teenagers.

A survey of 38,000 young people (reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association) showed that the rise is substantial.

I warned that this would happen back in 2020. I warned that the covid-19 jab would push up blood sugar levels.

The epidemic of type 1 diabetes is caused by the covid-19 vaccine. And the drug companies will now get ever richer selling treatments for diseases the drug companies caused.

Tea 3 riers bebe nt seek 46%:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

Everywhere you look there is evidence proving that the covid jab was a killer. In less than two and a half years nearly 2,000 healthy athletes have had heart attacks or sudden serious health problems - with over 1,300 of them dying.

And yet, in the summer of 2023, the medical establishment, bought with drug company money, was still refusing even to contemplate the idea that the deaths may be caused by their beloved vaccine. They didn't dare admit that the medical profession was responsible for thousands of unnecessary deaths because they were terrified of the inevitable lawsuits not to mention the professional embarrassment.

It was clear that doctors who gave the covid jab without properly assessing the dangers were going to be on the wrong end of the world's most expensive

class action lawsuit

But the vaccines have not been withdrawn No one in the drug companies or the medical establishment issued grovelling apologies

Instead, as had happened for over three years, the doctors who were exposing the dangers of the covid-19 jab were being harassed, banned and censored.

Any doctor who was still giving the covid-jab had shown themselves to be a dangerous fool who should be struck off the medical register for life and arrested immediately for attempted murder

38

It is, of course, possible to trace the plan to control the world back hundreds of years

In The Republic, Plato recommended creating a super-state headed by philosopher-kings Charlemagne wanted the world, and not just Europe, and who knows where Napoleon's ambitions would have ended Thomas More wanted Utopia and Alfred Lord Tennyson wanted much the same H G Wells took time off from writing excellent novels to toy with the idea of a global super-state

Those planning the conspiracy have always had a long-term plan but they also knew that they would, in their lifetimes, benefit enormously from their conspiracy

The conspirators may think of legacies and dynasties but although they like nothing more than to be described as philanthropists, they are not individuals who think much of the concept known as altruism The conspirators are men and women who believe very firmly that charity begins at home The conspirators do not do things just because they are the 'right things' to do If they make

Two more left 1 book 40%

THEIR ERRING PLAN

a donation to a college or a hospital or a foundation of some kind they insist that the recipients put their name on a building, a scholarship or some other memorial If they have a foundation then they will find a way to benefit from the foundation's tax-free status These are people who, by and large, know that they cannot be immortalised in statue form, because everyone who saw the statue

would say 'Who the devil was he', and so they force themselves onto the future in a more modern, practical way

39

All the events I have described so far are linked in which can best, and most appropriately, be described as global terrorism on a scale never previously seen — let alone imagined

Now it's time for some explanations and some revelations

It's time to go back over two centuries to the end of the 18th century when the

House of Rothschild was operating in Europe and when they created the basis of their wealth by financing wars

The Rothschilds didn't finance one side in a war They didn't give financial help to governments, kings or leaders of whom they approved, they financed both sides In wars they financed all the armaments involved and made profits from everyone During the 19th century, wars led (as wars always do) to an imbalance of power And at the heart of the power sharing sat the Rothschilds

The founder of the dynasty, Meyer Amschel Rothschild, who operated out of Frankfurt in Germany, was a crafty and rather greedy man who had five sons, four of whom he sent to various parts of Europe to organize financing in England, France, Austria and Italy The fifth son stayed in Germany

It has been said that the Rothschilds weren't merely profiteering but were behind all the wars in Europe in that time Millions of people died so that the Rothschilds could become rich. And with their wealth came power

How did this bunch of crooks make their money?

Simple

Wars cost money, lots of money, and the Rothschilds were always there with

bags of gold to pay for soldiers and guns and ammunition Whenever there was a battle there was always one certain winner the Rothschilds They lied, and deceived and tricked their way to becoming international bankers And, of course, to becoming incredibly wealthy They got rich by lending money to all the politicians and all the kings and charging them huge amounts of interest

Tew Denn left out book 47%:

THEIR EFFORTING PLAN

In the American Civil War, the Rothschilds helped finance both sides I wonder how many American children hear about that in their history lessons

Wars cost huge amounts of money and in the end, of course, it is a country's taxpayers who have to find the cash Financiers like lending money to governments because they know that they can charge a high rate of interest, they know that they will almost certainly get their money back and they know that if a government owes them money they will probably be able to do advantageous deals giving them monopolies, and the freedom to exploit natural resources such as areas containing oil or metals

This way of working was gradually copied by other bankers, and by the 21st century it was become clear to anyone who looked that when US troops stayed in a country after an invasion, they weren't there to help but to steal natural resources (Examples included Iraq, Libya and Syria) The American style was to create a war between two sides, send in troops to help whichever side they thought most sympathetic to the American cause (or whichever side had the best natural resources or wealth) and then steal whatever natural resources (oil,

gold, other minerals, antiquities or money) which the country had Today, no one likes to say much about the Rothschilds for one simple reason

they were Jewish And organisations such as the Anti-Defamation League have always regarded any attack on Jewish bankers as being anti-Semitic Academics, authors and journalists are always careful about mentioning the role Jewish bankers have played in the development of what is without doubt a global conspiracy because of the danger of being classified, and attacked, as anti-Semitic This is, of course, absolute nonsense Drawing attention to the actions of the Rothschilds and other Jewish bankers has nothing whatsoever to do with the Jewish people as a whole But for the conspirators it is convenient, quick and effective to use the anti-Semitic insult as a defence weapon to silence historians and honest commentators

In fact, Jews should be as angry as anyone about the actions of the Jewish bankers In World War II for example, the Warburgs, a Jewish banking family, helped to finance Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist Party If you want to know more about the role of the Warburgs take a look at Zina Cohen's The Shocking History of the EU

Newly minted international bankers (such as the Rothschilds) didn't just make vast amounts of money out of wars and governments, they also acquired extraordinary amounts of power So, for example, governments gave the bankers

Tew Denn let ut book 4a:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

the night to form central banks The Bank of France, the Bank of Germany, the Bank of England and, in America, the Federal Reserve were set up not by governments but by bankers with their own interests at heart

The story of how the Federal Reserve was created is extraordinary A bunch of leading American bankers took a trip to Jekyll Island in Georgia and created America's central bank in secret The story of this chicanery is told in G Edward Griffin's 600-page book The Creature from Jekyll Island A Second Look at the Federal Reserve The bankers were aided in obtaining control of America's money by a man called Colonel Edward Mandel House who was English and no more a colonel than Colonel Tom Parker, Elvis Presley's manager Colonel House was a behind-the-scenes fixer who wrote about establishing 'socialism as dreamed by Karl Marx' in America and who wanted a central bank which could provide flexible, inflatable paper currency and a graduated income tax House was said by some to be more powerful than President Woodrow Wilson and this does not seem at all far-fetched With House running the economy, America's national debt expanded by 300 per cent

In an attempt to disguise their perfidy some of the bankers behind the plan for the Federal Reserve pretended to oppose it New laws were passed which appeared to control the bankers but which actually gave them more money and more power

A similar system has been operated by the European Union for decades The eurocrats who create the EU's laws appear to be defending ordinary people by devising yet more laws and regulations to control banks and businesses In reality, the laws and regulations are introduced at the behest of lobbyists working on behalf of big banks and big international companies and they are part of the plan

to create a global financial system, a global currency and a global government. The powerful men and women who pay the lobbyists (not all of them bankers or financiers) know that the rules and regulations will make it impossible for new companies (and banks) to get started in business. Large companies, on the other hand, will ensure that the EU creates laws which don't actually affect their earnings. And, of course, they will hire huge departments full of specialists who can use the new legislation to their advantage. All this is aided by the fact that there is an easy movement of staff between the EU and the large companies. The EU is supposed to regulate. There has never been as corrupt an organisation as the European Union. Back in 1995, Brian Freemantle wrote an astonishing and revealing book called *The Octopus* about corruption in Europe. My own more re-

Sirs will book 4a:

THEIR ERR FLYING PLAN

cent book *OFPIIS* contains revelations which I still find astonishing. It is not surprising that the media and the British civil servants are strong supporters of the EU since they are all strong advocates of a world government and all that goes with it.

The real socialists, and the real communists, who welcomed the way the

bankers appeared to be working (and the central banks they created) had no idea that they were being manipulated and controlled by very rich, very crafty, men whose plan, even then, was a world government which they would control.

And those who were surprised that rich bankers should support the idea of a progressive income tax did not realise that the bankers (and their rich friends) would not be paying the tax for they would use foundations, trusts and offshore tax shelters to protect their wealth. And so individual bankers actually owned their countries' central banks and had the power to create money and control those countries and their populations. [It was Lenin who said that establishing a central bank was 90% of turning a country into a communist country and, indeed, having a central bank is one of the ten requirements listed in *The Communist Manifesto*.] It isn't surprising that Thomas Jefferson wrote that 'banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies'.

Even after the Bank of England and the Bank of France were theoretically brought under political control (and 'socialised') the bankers who had originally been the owners retained power over them. Montagu Norman, the longest serving Governor of the Bank of England (he held the post from 1920 to 1944) was described by the *Wall Street Journal* as 'the currency dictator of Europe'. Norman, who was by any standards a 'bad' man, boasted 'I hold the hegemony of the world'. In 1942, Norman was quoted as saying that 'the hegemony of world finance should reign supreme over everyone, everywhere, as one whole super-national control mechanism'.

Today, the central banks have enormous power. In the US, the Federal Reserve controls interest rates and the money supply and can, therefore, decide whether there is going to be a recession or a boom. It is the Federal Reserve that decides what happens to share prices and it is the Federal Reserve which decides whether Americans have to deal with inflation or deflation. The plan behind the

formation of the Federal Reserve was always a simple one to enable billionaires to pretend to introduce a socialist state, a workers' democracy, so that they could control the country and become dictators

SS ras wilt nr book 49%:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

The bankers had also realised that if they created artificial panics they would have even more power and make even more money By scaring ordinary investors {and pushing them into selling their shares, for example) they could make enormous profits And bankers have manipulated and controlled entire countries since the early years of the 20th century It was J P Morgan, the eponymous founder of one of the world's most powerful banks, who created panic in order to ensure that the Federal Reserve was created It was Morgan who pushed the US into the Great War in order to protect loans he had made to the British Government Woodrow Wilson had been re-elected as President after promising to keep America out of what was seen as an exclusively European war But while Wilson was busy promising that America would not get involved in the war between England and Germany, Colonel House was forging an agreement with England to do just the opposite The men who had been at the Jekyll Island meeting, and who had created the Federal Reserve, were keen to become involved because many of them had lent money to England and were keen to ensure that their money was not lost. And, of course, there was plenty of opportunity for businessmen to make money out of the war Bernard Baruch alone fixed up government contracts worth tens of billions of dollars The mainstream media was told to switch from opposing entry into the war to saying that it was essential for America to become involved Authors Gary Allen and Larry Abraham reported that one British MP, Arthur Ponsonby, wrote that 'there must have been more deliberate lying in the world from 1914 to 1918 than in any other period in the world's history'

Tragically, it now seems clear that the decision to push America into the war did far more harm than good and it was certainly the beginning of America's long period of being involved in wars between other countries (America has been at war with someone, somewhere pretty much since 1914 The bankers,

the financiers and the arms manufacturers need constant war)

Bankers and arms dealers made fortunes However, Winston Churchill noted

that everyone, everywhere would have been better off if the Americans had stayed out of the war He argued that peace would have been made with Germany, that there would have been no collapse in Russia leading to communism and no collapse in Italy leading to the rise of Mussolini and fascism Most importantly, perhaps, the Nazis would have never been able to take power in Germany if the Americans had stayed at home and a settlement had been agreed between England and Germany The negotiators at Versailles, who allegedly sorted out

SS ras wilt nr book 49%:

THEIR ERR FYING PLAN

the peace settlement after WWI knew damned well that it was going to make

things worse rather than better And remember what happened to the Middle East and the attempt by T E Lawrence {Lawrence of Arabia) to provide the Arabs with a fair solution

Lord Curzon remarked that the Versailles treaty was 'not a peace treaty' He described it as 'sumply a break in hostilities' and he was, of course, absolutely correct in his assessment

Not long after the end of the Great War ('the war to end all wars' and not, then, of course, given a number) the American bankers were lending money to a German politician called Adolf Hitler And during the Second World War, American companies were providing the Nazis with essential supplies Moreover, even before the end of World War II, the insiders were carving up Europe and planning more wars

(Incidentally, many Americans, particularly those who lost loved ones in the Vietnam War, might be surprised to learn that the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese received 85% of their arms from Russia and Soviet Bloc countries and that those suppliers were helped by American bankers and industrialists Once again the conspirators in America were financing and equipping both sides of a war and providing the enemy with the bullets which were killing American soldiers The rules said that American companies couldn't sell 'strategic' weapons (such as guns) to the enemy, but they could sell the tools to make the guns The Vietnam War was fought without there having been a formal declaration of war and so the financiers could not be arrested for treason.)

The end of the Great War provided the bankers, the fixers such as Colonel House and the other insiders with a real chance to set up a world government And so the League of Nations was created The problem was that everyone involved in the negotiations knew that everyone else present was cheating and lying and no one trusted anyone The Americans huffed and puffed and walked out and the proposed World Government fell apart

Not everyone in America had given up, however
The ubiquitous Colonel House met with members of The Round Table and the

Royal Institute of International Affairs and the Council of Foreign Affairs Their plan was to try to work out a way to persuade the voters of Europe and America that they needed a world government to guarantee peace

Meanwhile, after J.P Morgan's death it was his bank which helped to finance the Revolution in Russia

SFIS el wt book 20%:

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

More importantly, America and the West had manufactured an 'enemy', and governments had an excuse to spend billions on manufacturing arms to defend themselves

It was all horribly easy to organise
Between 1923 and 1929, the Federal Reserve increased the supply of dollars

by nearly two thirds At the same time the mainstream media promoted shares with tremendous enthusiasm and, as a result, the stock market soared A major stock market crash was planned in 1927 and the Federal Reserve Board worked with the heads of central banks in Europe to make sure that everything went according to their plan What happened next is no secret Thousands of investors were ruined in the crash of 1929 The bankers got richer Many of them had sold 'short' and made fortunes out of the crash they'd helped create

And the same scenario is repeated at irregular intervals

The bankers start a scare

The frightened investors sell their shares cheaply

The bankers buy the cheap shares and make a fortune They are never pun-

ished in any way for their dishonesty and greed (For example, if you want a quick guide to the crash of 2008, I recommend the film *The Big Short*)

Alternatively, by starting a rumour that a specific company was in financial trouble, the bankers could start a panic, buy the shares sold by panicking investors and then make a fortune The bankers did that often too Except for artists of one sort or another, very few people ever get extremely rich honestly Behind every great fortune there is a history of theft, deceit and chicanery The insiders who run countries and start wars manage the markets, establish monopolies, control natural resources (such as oil and essential minerals), fix prices, control the labour market and buy and sell politicians

And, of course, anyone exposing the truth will be dismissed as paranoid, con-

demned as a conspiracy theorist and labelled discredited

This has been going on for well over a century And it's still happening today

Financial markets are regularly manipulated Central banks (which often appear to be run by incompetent people) force debts higher, play with interest rates in a way that destroys economies and push up inflation when it suits them and the big banks (When interest rates rose rapidly in the UK in 2023 and people with borrowings were paying 7% or more, savers were still receiving less than 1% interest It was clear it was profiteering, shylocking, and that the plan to impoverish everyone was being followed precisely) Recessions and depressions

ES now is in book 31%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

appear periodically as and when required The bankers, and the central bankers, know that only precious metals such as gold and silver hold their value

As Lord Curzon and Winston Churchill had both foreseen, the Great War was not the end of European hostilities In 1939, the Second World War began Hitler was helped by the Round Table Group since it was generally felt among the insiders that a Second World War would make it easier to start a world government with the bankers and other insiders running things, and the people of the world being turned into drones (For more about the financing of the Second World War I suggest that you read Zina Cohen's book *The Shocking History of the EU*)

As soon as the Second World War started (and years before America became involved) the insiders in the US set up a Committee on Post-War problems And it was this group of American crooks (aka Wall Street movers and shakers) who set up the United Nations with the plan that this would, at last, lead to the development of their beloved world government The people involved in the formation of the United Nations included Nelson Rockefeller and a man called John McCloy Nelson Rockefeller is well known but McCloy not so widely known

McCloy, a former president of the World Bank, had been a partner in a law firm which represented the American portion of German company IG Farben and subsequently acquired a reputation for having sympathy for the Nazis For example, early in the Second World War, McCloy used his influence to block attempts by Jewish organisations to persuade the US Air Force to bomb Auschwitz because he knew how crucial the concentration camp was to German Industry It was known that it would have been easy for bombers to destroy the gas chambers and key railway junctions but McCloy (who was, at the time, the Assistant Secretary of War) claimed that bombing Auschwitz might annoy the Germans and provoke them into vindictive actions Some found it difficult to understand precisely what 'vindictive actions' he had in mind And it was McCloy's actions after the end of the War which helped create the European Union

After the end of World War II, McCloy became US High Commissioner for West Germany In addition to releasing many industrialists who had been sentenced to prison, he also arranged for Nazi camp doctors and SS officers to be released or to have their sentences substantially reduced

As soon as McCloy had arranged for their release, the executives from IG Farben quickly re-joined German companies, with, for example, Schmutz joining the board of Deutsche Bank McCloy was never subjected to serious criticism for any of his actions because he was obeying American instructions Although

54 million in book 32%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

President Eisenhower had wanted to end Germany of the influence of the Nazis, there were other powerful Americans who felt differently Acheson Dulles, John Foster Dulles and General Patton all wanted the Germans to control Europe as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

After the War, McCloy served as chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank and the Ford Foundation (Thomas McKittrick also became a director of Chase Manhattan, a bank which had had strong links with the Nazis during the War } McCloy also became chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations and an adviser to five American Presidents In 1963, McCloy, the man who had worked with the manufacturer of the gas which had been used to murder millions of Jews and who had ordered the early release of some of Germany's worst war criminals, was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Lyndon B Johnson

It was entirely thanks to the efforts of people such as McCloy and McKittrick that Schmutz, Krupp and other war criminals (who were as responsible as Hitler, Himmler et al for the horrors of the Second World War, and the efficient brutal-

ity of the Naz: war machine) received no punishment at all or the sort of punishment usually regarded as suitable for small time motoring offenders It was released war criminals who helped found the European Union

Being much richer than Rudolf Hess, and having more powerful friends, Krupp, who had been sentenced to 12 years imprisonment at Nuremberg, was released by the American McCloy after just three years in prison It is worth recording that Krupp's imprisonment does not sound much like punishment A room in the prison was set aside so that the Krupp directors could discuss corporate business, and Krupp was supplied with the best food and wines available He apparently took delight in insulting the people who had been responsible for his incarceration Incredibly, McCloy even arranged for Krupp to be pardoned and his record as a war criminal expunged after his release

Krupp's industrial empire had controlled slave labourers in 57 concentration camps and Krupp, who was also Hitler's Minister of Armament and War Production, was close to the German high command He was responsible for transferring factories from occupied territories to the German Reich He was one of the most evil members of the Nazi regime and was awarded medals by Hitler for keeping up production of arms through the use of slave labour

McCloy later explained his pardon for Krupp by claiming that the German was a 'playboy who had not had much responsibility' In fact, Krupp had been very

54 in the book 32%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

much a hands-on operator, and running the companies had been entirely his responsibility Astonishingly, McCloy even ordered that all of Krupp's property, which had been confiscated after the War, be restored to him so that he suffered not at all After his release and pardon, Krupp, one of the richest and worst German war criminals, quickly became a seemingly 'respectable' German citizen accepted by German society and playing an important part in the ennobling of Germany and the development of the European Union

It was McCloy who helped the Nazis set up the European Union after the end of World War II

And, of course, he was one of the Americans who helped to found the United Nations

The Communist Party instructed its members that 'Great popular support and enthusiasm for the United Nations' policies should be built up, well organised and fully articulate But it is also necessary to do more than that, The opposition must be rendered so impotent that it will be unable to gather any significant support in the Senate against the United Nations Charter and the treaties which will follow'

And so the Communist Party supported, endorsed and promoted an organisation (the United Nations) which had been set up by a bunch of American bankers

Naturally, the mainstream media managed to convince people that the new organisation was set up to promote world peace and most of those now promoting its activities, and parroting the official line, do so without knowing precisely what lies behind the propaganda. Since its formation, the goal of the United Nations has been to abolish all individual countries. And American Presidents have remained loyal to that goal. In 1992, President George Bush said 'It is the sacred principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter to which the American people will henceforth pledge their allegiance.' Not, you will note, the American

flag

So, now we know where the United Nations came from

And, more importantly, we know that the United Nations was set up by

American bankers and the Communist Party and its aim is to set up a world government. This helps to explain the behaviour of the UN in recent years. All those individuals who thought that the UN was merely a kindly organisation set up to promote the sort of gentle world peace loved so much by Miss World contestants can think again.

53% in book 33%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

Oh, and it is, of course, important to remember that the World Health Organisation, the promoter of face masks and pseudo vaccines which are dangerous and don't work, is a subsidiary of the United Nations.

And now, to find out in more detail how we ended up in a nightmare world, read Part Three and I will explain exactly what has happened and why and who is responsible.

But, before we get there, I have included a short interlude of Illumination.

EZion's 1% in book 3q%,

THEIR "ERR PEN G LAY"

Screenshots saved

lapio Re your screenshots

Part Two SHS RE c3 LELE

Interlude

I have collected the quotations which follow during the last few years. At first, I intended to sprinkle them throughout the text. And then I thought I'd just leave them out. But eventually, I decided to include them in a special section as a prelude to the next part of the book.

'The first thing that we ask of a writer is that he shall not tell lies, that he shall say what he really thinks, what he really feels' ~ George Orwell

'When you know the enemy's plans, it will be easy to gain victory by means of an appropriate response' — Miyamoto Musashi

All warfare is based on deception To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill' ~ Sun Tzu

Power is not a means, it is an end The object of persecution is persecution The object of power is power' — George Orwell

'The United Nations represents a potential threat of very great magnitude' - Charles Lichtenstein (former US Ambassador to the United Nations)

'The evidence is compelling that reconsideration of the world monetary system is overdue Therefore, national economies need monetary coordination mechanisms and that is why an integrated world economy needs a common monetary standard, which is the best neutral inflationary coordinating device But, no national currency will do ~ only a world currency will work' - President Ronald Reagan, 1983

'Paper is likely to be abused, has been, is, and forever will be abused, in every country in which it is permitted - Thomas Jefferson, on fiat currencies

'James Madison said 'It is a universal truth that the loss of liberty at home is to be charged to the provisions against danger, real or pretended, from abroad Fear of foreign peril, Madison realised, can easily persuade a freedom-loving people to voluntarily part with liberties they would otherwise consider indispensable' - William J Watkins Jr

S&P 500 is up 3%

THEIR HYPERFIXED PLAN

'Sometimes I wonder if the world is run by smart people who are putting us on, or by imbeciles who really mean it' - Mark Twain

The first panacea for a mismanaged nation is inflation of the currency, the second is war Both bring a temporary prosperity, both bring a permanent ruin But both are the refuge of political and economic opportunists' - Ernest Hemingway

'Of course we can split genes The question is can we not split genes' — Jean Paul Sartre

'Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have shown will never be uprooted' - Vladimir Lenin

'My Government is the world's leading purveyor of violence' — Martin Luther King

(Politics) is all about sincerity If you can fake that, you've got it made' - George Burns

'News is what somebody somewhere wants to suppress, all the rest is advertising'

ing '— Lord Northcliffe

'There is no such thing as society There is only the market.' - Margaret Thatcher

'Perceptions become reality' — Henry Kissinger (after Niccolo Machiavelli)

'When you have eliminated the improbable, whatever remains, however improbable must be the truth' - Sherlock Holmes via Arthur Conan Doyle

'Naturally, the common people don't want war, neither in Russia, nor in England, nor for that matter in Germany That is understood But, after all, it is the leaders of the country who determine the policy and it is always a simple matter to drag the people along, whether it is a democracy or a fascist dictatorship, or a parliament, or a communist dictatorship Voice or no voice the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders That is easy All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger, it works the same in any country' — Hermann Goerring

= ns lel in book 35%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

'It was on the advice of Governor Rockefeller, who described Mr Kissinger as 'the smartest guy available', that Mr Nixon chose him for his top advisor on foreign policy' - US News and World Report, 1971

'The history of the twentieth century can best be understood by coming to the realisation that for the first time in the course of human events, the whole world has come under a single idea This idea, which goes by many names and under many guises, always ends up in some form of collectivism, which crushes the lives and aspirations of individuals in its utopian quest for heaven on earth' - Donald McAlvany

'To parody the words of Winston Churchill, never have so many been manipulated so much by so few'— Aldous Huxley

'It is forbidden to kill, therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets' - Voltaire

'Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety' — Benjamin Franklin

'The people never give up their liberties but under some delusion' - Edmund Burke

If you do not fight for right when you can easily win without bloodshed, if you will not fight when your victory will be sure and not too costly, you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds against you and only a precarious chance of survival There may be even a worse fight You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory because it is better to perish than live as slaves' ~ Winston Churchill

‘With stupidity the Gods themselves struggle in vain’ — Friedrich Schiller

‘The atmosphere of hatred in which controversy is conducted blinds people. To admit that an opponent might be both honest and intelligent is felt to be intolerable’ - George Orwell

‘The world is governed by very different personages from what is imagined by those who are not behind the scenes’ - Benyamun Disraeli

= misleut book 35%,

THEIR “ERR FLYING PLAN

‘Man’s dearest possession is his life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past, so live that, dying, he might say all my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world ~ the fight for the Liberation of Mankind’ - Nicolai Ostrovsky

‘Doctor, there is no place for an ill old woman or an ill old man anywhere in this world — if they lack money’ — Andrew MacAlain

‘Truth lives on in the midst of deception’ - Friedrich Schiller

SOs lele li book 6%,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

Part Three: How things got the way they are

Introduction

In the introduction to his brilliantly researched book *The Greening of the Environmentalists’ Drive for Global Power*, Larry Abraham {who wrote the book with Frankhn Sanders) explained that he had for 30 years observed and chronicled numerous onslaughts which were designed to reduce the sovereignty of the individual and transfer more power to our governments. And he warned (and his book was published in 1993 so the warnings were made three decades ago) that the greatest surrender of liberty in all human history was underway and that power was being transferred to a small group of people - the Establishment

Abraham pointed out that every one of the projects designed to take away our rights and give them to our governments was promoted as ‘necessary’ or ‘vital’ and that some were touted as ‘life-saving’

He explained that a well organised minority somehow managed to create ‘the appearance of popular support’ for projects designed to ‘preserve the environment’ or ‘stop pollution’, and that the people behind these programmes were members of a small group

He quotes Arthur Selwyn Miller, a former Professor of Law at George Washington University who wrote ‘Those who formally rule take their signals and

commands not from the electorate as a body, but from a second group of men (plus a few women) This group will be called the Establishment It exists even though that existence is stoutly denied. It is one of the secrets of the American social order' And he added 'A second secret is the fact that the existence of the Establishment ~ the ruling class ~ is not supposed to be discussed' I would add that most of the people involved in promoting the myth of climate change are probably intellectually undersized and possibly clinically insane

Even thirty years ago the climate change campaigners were 'steamrolling all opposition, silencing critics by a feigned moral and intellectual superiority, and, in the process, transferring global wealth and power on an unprecedented scale'

Well-intentioned but misguided people, manipulated and tricked into believing carefully constructed lies, now protest about the environment, and instead of marching for peace (as happened in the 1960s) they are campaigning, with increasing venom, against man himself They fly around the world in their tens of thousands (without ever seeing the irony in what they are doing) to listen to

Sorin's last book =6%,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

speeches from skilled manipulators who have arrived at the conference venue in their private jets They have been lied to repeatedly, and brainwashed into believing that man-made climate change is our greatest enemy Anyone who dares to refer to the true science, and who questions the lies, must be attacked, demonised, cancelled and silenced

The misguided thousands are told to say that there must be no debate because there is no doubt but in reality there must be no debate because if there were a debate then it would quickly become very clear that the Emperor is naked and everything the public has been told about man-made climate change is a lie Anyone who questions their myth and their lies, and who dares to argue that man-made climate change is not a real threat, will be demonised and dismissed as discredited

On the other hand, those who promote the myth are applauded and well-rewarded for their obedience (and stupidity)

Abraham pointed out that the dedication of well-meaning people was being manipulated (with phony data) and that while endless billions of dollars of public money was being spent, fortunes were being made

Today, exactly the same lies are being told in the Americas, in Europe, in Asia and in Australasia Politicians and media commentators everywhere are sticking to the script they have been given and, unquestioningly, repeating everything they've been told to repeat Any politician who dares to step out of line is immediately crushed

"What's happening in the 'environmental' movement is not a zero-sum game," argued Abraham thirty years ago "There are winners and losers on a vast scale"

In this section of this book I will show how ruthless bankers and financiers

have, for many decades, systematically taken over all the world's institutions, and how they have deliberately and cold bloodedly used the mythical threat of climate change to begin a process which will, if not stopped, almost certainly lead to a totalitarian world government and the deaths of billions. The conspirators behind the climate change myth want to control all natural resources. They want all the power and all the money. And to achieve their aims they will destroy every aspect of human life that stands in their way: they will destroy family life, culture, history, patriotism and religion. They will destroy pride, respect and caring because they see these as annoying and potentially expensive weaknesses. The leaders of this massive scheme, mainly based in the United States, claim that 'a policy for safeguarding the environment is also a policy for safeguarding

47 lies fed in book = 70,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

Screenshot saved
lapio vw your sereg thot

world peace' which sire even CELE! an endless (and it is endless) S@ricu ws wuss eemacee sears aun es ae usiwars. Of great wealth while at the same creating famine, starvation and genocide.

Ironically, the conspirators frequently claim that their actions have helped eradicate war. For example, they claim that the United Nations and the EU were both founded to stop war. This is patent nonsense. The world has more wars now than ever before. America has been at war almost constantly for 100 years. Never before, in human history, have as many people been killed or injured in wars as were killed or injured in the 20th century.

The bankers and their allies created the United Nations, an institution built on a fraud, to help them create a world government, and together with leftover Nazis they created the European Union, because they felt that regional powers would also lead them in that direction. And then they hurried things along by creating the climate change myth, regarding it and the absurdity of 'net zero' as effective weapons in their war for total control.

Finally, to hedge their bets, they continued with the war-making, inciting wars, deposing or killing unhelpful leaders and using loans and debts to enable them to steal natural resources.

We are witnessing the greatest crime in history and if we are going to do anything about it we have to recognise that time is running out.

Meanwhile, in order to fight this deadly virus of fear and lies, we need to follow the timeline and see who our enemies are, how they have fought this war. Only by doing this can we look at their strengths and their weaknesses. In this part of the book I'm going to deal with the most significant influencers who have shaped our thinking on climate change, population control and other vital issues.

I should point out, of course, that the dates I have selected were taken not

at random but as necessarily selective and representative of the clearly visible trend designed to take us towards a world government, using the pseudoscientific myth of climate change as the weapon with which to create fear, mass hysteria and compliance

1762

Jean Jacques Rousseau, a Swiss writer and philosopher, published The Social Contract in 1762. It was Rousseau who first pointed out that as people had grown less dependent on nature so they had become more dependent upon each

46 in the book = 70,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

world peace' while, at the same time, starting and prosecuting an endless (and it is endless) series of wars which have resulted in the transfer of great wealth while at the same time creating famine, starvation and genocide

Ironically, the conspirators frequently claim that their actions have helped eradicate war. For example, they claim that the United Nations and the EU were both founded to stop war. This is patent nonsense. The world has more wars now than ever before. America has been at war almost constantly for 100 years. Never before, in human history, have as many people been killed or injured in wars as were killed or injured in the 20th century.

The bankers and their allies created the United Nations, an institution built on a fraud, to help them create a world government, and together with leftover Nazis they created the European Union, because they felt that regional powers would also lead them in that direction. And then they hurried things along by creating the climate change myth, regarding it and the absurdity of 'net zero' as effective weapons in their war for total control.

Finally, to hedge their bets, they continued with the war-making, inciting wars, deposing or killing unhelpful leaders and using loans and debts to enable them to steal natural resources.

We are witnessing the greatest crime in history and if we are going to do anything about it we have to recognise that time is running out.

Meanwhile, in order to fight this deadly virus of fear and lies, we need to follow the timeline and see who our enemies are, how they have fought this war. Only by doing this can we look at their strengths and their weaknesses. In this part of the book I'm going to deal with the most significant influencers who have shaped our thinking on climate change, population control and other vital issues.

I should point out, of course, that the dates I have selected were taken not

at random but as necessarily selective and representative of the clearly visible trend designed to take us towards a world government, using the pseudoscientific myth of climate change as the weapon with which to create fear, mass hysteria and compliance.

1762

Jean Jacques Rousseau, a Swiss writer and philosopher, published *The Social Contract* in 1762. It was Rousseau who first pointed out that as people had grown less dependent on nature so they had become more dependent upon each

46 is the nr book = 70,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

other - with this, inevitably, leading to a loss of freedom. Today, we see this most vividly in the way that power cuts leave us helpless and strikers cause chaos. In *'The Social Contract'*, Rousseau pointed out that 'man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains' but then added that 'Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed preter slaves than they'. Rousseau was an advocate of the 'back to nature' theory that is now so widespread. Curiously, however, he is now pretty well forgotten though he did have an influence as a very early environmentalist.

1798

This was the year when an English economist and vicar called Thomas Malthus created the notion that the earth could only hold so many people. He warned that population growth had gone faster than food production and that better living conditions meant that families were able to have more children. He also suggested that the increase in population was a result of a higher birth rate. All his theories were quickly proved to be quite daft. His first theory, that population growth would exceed food supply and cause starvation, has never been the case. There is a great deal of starvation in the world today (in 2023) but that is not because there isn't enough food but because there is too much food in some parts of the planet and not enough food in other parts. His theory that better living standards would mean more children has been proved wrong too. If anything, people usually tend to have smaller families as they grow wealthier. And his notion that the population was increasing because of a higher birth rate was also proved wrong. The population was increasing because more people were surviving infancy and, therefore, living longer.

Malthus's work led to the eugenics movement which suggested that undesirable and mentally ill folk should be sterilised to stop them breeding.

During the Third Reich, eugenics became very popular with the Nazis and the idea was spread around the world quite successfully by a number of people. For example, Margaret Sanger, a radical feminist and the founder of Planned Parenthood took the idea to America where she called for coercive sterilisation, mandatory segregation and rehabilitative concentration camps for all those she regarded as dysgenic. In the 1970s, George Bush (later to become President George Bush) said that 'it is quite clear that one of the major challenges of the 1970s will be to curb the world's fertility'.

with

feature

] For 46 is the nr book

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

Today, those who promote the idea that the world is overpopulated (and that something must be done about it) are often rightly labelled as racist — a label which it is as difficult to remove as it is to deny. Its, I suspect, their insistence that the answer to the overpopulation problem lies with poor countries in Africa and Asia, rather than with billionaires with large farms, that makes it easy for sensible observers to link the overpopulation argument with racism.

There are many large holes in the argument that the world is overpopulated and that there isn't enough food to go round. So, for example, it is well established that farmers use less than half of the Earth's arable land and yet, despite that, global food production has consistently increased much faster than population growth. Moreover, some of the most populated countries on earth (such as the Netherlands) have nevertheless been traditional exporters of food.

Several food experts have suggested that the earth could easily support a population of 30-40 billion. Colin Clark of Oxford concluded that the earth could supply an American style diet for over 35 billion and that if people ate a Japanese diet, the earth could feed over 100 billion. Roger Revelle, the former director of

the Harvard Center for Population studies, estimated that the earth could provide 2,500 calories a day for 40 billion people — even if farmers were using less than a quarter of the available land.

Finally, there is now a widely held belief that the problem is not that the earth is too crowded but that there are too few young people around. Many countries (including China and Japan) have tried to encourage couples to have more children.

1891

It was in 1891 that Cecil Rhodes, the man who first realised the extent of the mineral wealth in southern Africa (and who gave his name to a country),

founded an organisation called The Round Table. Rhodes, who believed in the idea of a world government, also set up a fund for scholarships at Oxford University and many of the leading Americans for a century have been beneficiaries of that fund. Bill Clinton was just one famous Rhodes Scholar. The Round Table has steadily grown in influence over the years.

1913

US income tax was enacted in 1913 but within a few years, oil and mineral companies managed to free themselves from the onerous burden of paying taxes.

45% of the tin in the book 39%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

Today, those who promote the idea that the world is overpopulated (and that something must be done about it) are often rightly labelled as racist — a label which it is as difficult to remove as it is to deny. Its, I suspect, their insistence that the answer to the overpopulation problem lies with poor countries in Africa and Asia, rather than with billionaires with large farms, that makes it easy for sensible observers to link the overpopulation argument with racism.

There are many large holes in the argument that the world is overpopulated and that there isn't enough food to go round. So, for example, it is well established that farmers use less than half of the Earth's arable land and yet, despite that, global food production has consistently increased much faster than population growth. Moreover, some of the most populated countries on earth (such as the Netherlands) have nevertheless been traditional exporters of food.

Several food experts have suggested that the earth could easily support a population of 30-40 billion. Colin Clark of Oxford concluded that the earth could supply an American style diet for over 35 billion and that if people ate a Japanese diet, the earth could feed over 100 billion. Roger Revelle, the former director of

the Harvard Center for Population studies, estimated that the earth could provide 2,500 calories a day for 40 billion people — even if farmers were using less than a quarter of the available land.

Finally, there is now a widely held belief that the problem is not that the earth is too crowded but that there are too few young people around. Many countries (including China and Japan) have tried to encourage couples to have more children.

1891

It was in 1891 that Cecil Rhodes, the man who first realised the extent of the mineral wealth in southern Africa (and who gave his name to a country),

founded an organisation called The Round Table. Rhodes, who believed in the idea of a world government, also set up a fund for scholarships at Oxford University and many of the leading Americans for a century have been beneficiaries of that fund. Bill Clinton was just one famous Rhodes Scholar. The Round Table has steadily grown in influence over the years.

1913

US income tax was enacted in 1913 but within a few years, oil and mineral companies managed to free themselves from the onerous burden of paying taxes.

45% of tin ore 39%,

THEIR DEFENDING PLAN

They did this largely because they qualified for something called a US depletion allowance — which is a tax deductible credit reflecting the value of the oil which has been taken out of the ground. (Naturally none of this money goes to the countries from which the oil is actually being taken.) In addition, oil companies, like drug companies, manage to avoid paying tax by the use of foreign subsidiaries based in low or no tax countries. So, American oil companies took on from Saudi Arabia and then sold it to Panamanian or Liberian affiliates. These affiliates then sold the oil to distributors in the US or Europe, making sure that the price was high enough to ensure that the distributors didn't have to pay much if any tax. Liberia and Panama are tax free zones and both use the US dollar as their currencies so they are extremely convenient.

1921

At the end of the Great War (later to be renamed World War I), American and

British delegates at Versailles (where the Middle East was divided up and shared out among America, Britain and the major oil companies) formed something called the Institute of International Affairs and in 1921, the American branch of the Institute was created and named the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The Council's leadership and main influencers were bankers and lawyers acting for bankers. For over a century now the CFR has been at the centre of American politics and most Secretaries of State, National Security Advisors, CIA Directors and UN Ambassadors have been members. It has been usual, too, for chairmen of the Federal Reserve to be members of the CFR. Other members have included leading bankers John Kenneth Galbraith and George F Kennan (both of whom we will meet later) were also members of the CFR. It is the CFR not the two main political parties which controls the United States, and a fairly superficial scrutiny will show that The Republicans and the Democrats are actually members of the same party (The same thing is true of the UK where there is rarely, if ever, any discernible policy difference between the three main political parties). In his book *Power Shift*, author Alvin Toffler describes the people who have the power in the US as 'The Invisible Party'. In the UK, by the way, the British version of the CFR is known as the Royal Institute for International Affairs.

1930

The BIS was created in 1930 by the world's central banks, including the Federal Reserve Bank in New York and the Bank of England in London. The BIS was

44% in book 39%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

primarily the brainchild of Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, the president of the German Reichsbank and the Nazi Minister of Economics.

Schacht set up the BIS because he knew that there was eventually going to be a war between Germany and other European countries. The plan was that the BIS would enable the Nazis to maintain channels of communication between Berlin and financial institutions around the world. Schacht made sure that the BIS's charter emphasised that the Bank would remain immune from censure or closure during war. Moreover, Schacht was clever enough to disguise the BIS's main purpose by claiming that the BIS would help Germany provide the Allies with financial reparations owed after World War I. However, instead of money flowing from Germany to the Allies, it went in the other direction and was used to help Hitler build up a war chest for the coming conflict. The Nazis were undoubtedly helped in this by the fact that the first presidents of the BIS, who were American, were easy to deal with (One of the first presidents of the BIS was an American called Leon Fraser who had been a tabloid journalist and who had little or no background in banking). The BIS, the central bank for central bankers,

quickly became the most important and powerful bank in the world.

In March 1938, Hitler's armies moved into Austria, and one of the first things

the troops did was to steal the nation's gold and transport it to vaults controlled by the BIS. More Nazi troops tried to do the same thing when they marched into Prague. Nazi soldiers demanded that the directors of the Czech National Bank hand over Czechoslovakia's supply of gold — \$48 million worth. The directors replied that they had already moved the gold to the BIS with instructions that it

be sent to the Bank of England. Unfazed by this, the Nazis simply instructed the Czechs to tell the Bank of England to send the gold back to Switzerland. The Governor of the Bank of England (a flamboyant and traitorous exhibitionist called Montagu Norman) made life easier for the Nazis by immediately authorising the BIS in Switzerland to take \$48 million worth of gold from the Bank of England's account and to put it straight into the German account so that it was immediately available for the Nazis to use. By 1939, when the War began, the BIS had made many millions available to the Nazis.

For decades, the Bank for International Settlements, then and now the most powerful bank in the world, has been so secretive that it is not even mentioned in most books about the Second World War. Today, it is still the central bank for the world's central banks but it is no exaggeration to say that without the BIS and

44 is left in book of G*,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

IG Farben there would have been no Second World War. And there would be no European Union.

In 1940 an American, Thomas McKittrick, was appointed president of BIS as a replacement for Leon Fraser. McKittrick was a lawyer and a friend of the Nazi party and he turned BIS into an arm of the Reichsbank. Fluent in German, McKit

trick had previously worked for Lee, Higginson and Company and had made large loans to the Nazis. There is no doubt that McKittrick's sympathies were with Germany. Indeed, in 1940, during the War, he went to Berlin and had a meeting at the Reichsbank with the Gestapo. And the BIS under McKittrick continued to act as a middleman for stolen gold.

By the start of World War II, the BIS was already controlled by Hitler. McKittrick was the president of the Bank but the other directors included Hitler's economic adviser, Dr Walther Funk, Emu Puhl, a director of the Reichsbank, Hermann Schmitz, the head of the Nazi conglomerate known as IG Farben (the company which built the concentration camps and supplied the poison gas for the gas chambers) and Baron Kurt von Schroder, a banker and Gestapo officer.

Throughout the War, the BIS accepted and stored looted gold and carried out foreign exchange deals on behalf of Hitler. Much of the gold accepted by the BIS came from the teeth and belongings of concentration camp victims. Hitler's economic adviser, Walther Funk, worked with Heinrich Himmler (a leading Nazi and head of the SS) to ensure that gold from concentration camp victims was put into a special Reichsbank account. Gold from jewels, spectacle frames, watches, cigarette cases and teeth was melted down into 20 kilogram bars and sent to Switzerland where it could be 'laundered' through the Swiss National Bank before being made available to the Nazis, via the BIS, as 'clean' gold. McKittrick, who constantly provided the Reichsbank with intelligence material, helped the Nazis take control of occupied countries and their banks.

Astonishingly, the Bank of England continued to cooperate with the BIS throughout the War, although the British directors Sir Otto Niemeyer and Montagu Norman must have known that the BIS was effectively Hitler's mex-

haustible piggy bank Without the BIS's cooperation, the Nazis would have run out of money for arms and the Second World War would have probably never started or would have ended within a year or so at most In June 1940, \$228 million worth of gold which the Belgian Government was trying to send to safety was intercepted by the BIS and redirected to the Reichsbank Money stolen from

44 is in his book *oG**,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

Holland also went via the BIS to the Nazis Most of the money paid out by the BIS in dividends went to Hitler's Germany

In February 1942, two months after Pearl Harbour, the Reichsbank and the German and Italian Governments decided that McKittrick should remain President of the BIS for the duration of the War In one Nazi document it was stated that 'McKittnick's opinions are safely known to us' The faith of the Nazis was well placed, for the BIS continued to provide gold for their use

Throughout the Second World War McKittrick travelled around Europe quite freely, on occasion being escorted by Himmler's special SS police force McKittrick even went back to America for a meeting with the Federal Reserve Bank and then returned to Berlin where he reported to the Reichsbank

Not everyone ignored what was happening in Switzerland In his book *The Hidden Enemy* published in 1943, Heinz Pol wrote 'The Bank for International Settlements in neutral Basel, Switzerland, has been, since 1941, almost entirely controlled by Axis representatives 'In 1943, Congressman Jerry Voorhis of California called for an investigation into the BIS, demanding to know why an American was the President of a bank which was being used by and for the Nazis Nothing happened Again, in early 1944, Congressman John F Coffee asked similar questions He pointed out that the majority of the board of the BIS was made up of Nazi officials but that American money was being deposited in the bank At an International Monetary Conference held at Bretton Woods in 1944, a Norwegian economist called Willam Keilhau called for the BIS to be dissolved and for there to be an investigation of the bank's books and records However, Keynes, an influential economist, said that the BIS should be allowed to continue until a new world bank and an international monetary fund could be set up. Amazingly, the argument for retaining the BIS was that the bank would help restore and rebuild Germany at the end of the War It was argued that if the BIS were dissolved, the Germans would fear that their relationship with America might not survive the end of the War

Nevertheless it was decided by the Americans that the BIS should be liquidated Astonishingly, however, McKittrick simply refused to accept the decision He wrote to America and to Britain arguing that when the War ended the Allies would have to pay huge sums of money for the rebuilding of Germany and that these would be best paid through the BIS When questioned about the gold which the Nazis had stolen, McKittnick replied, apparently with a straight face, that it was being held in the vaults of the Reichsbank so that it could be returned

42 is in his book *G14*,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

to its owners after the end of the War In May of 1944, McKittrick and his staff dealt with the \$378 million in gold which the Nazi Government sent to Switzerland for use after the War By then the Nazis realised that they were losing the War and the gold (some of which had been stolen from the national banks of Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Holland and some of which had been

melted down from gold collected from jewellery spectacle frames and teeth of murdered prisoners in the concentration camps) was intended to be used by the Nazis after the end of the War McKittrick must have known this but he and the BIS were happy to deal with the stolen gold In 1948, the BIS was ordered to hand the looted gold over to the Allies The amount handed over came to just \$4 million

No one at the BIS ever admitted what had happened to the hundreds of millions in stolen gold which had been deposited there by the Nazis No one ever found the \$374 million which was missing from the money sent for the use of the Nazis after the end of the War

There was ample evidence to show that McKittrick had willingly cooperated with the Nazis but after the War he was given important posts in America including being made vice-president of the Chase National Bank (This was perhaps not surprising since during the War the Chase Bank in Paris had helped finance the Nazis)

After the end of the War, Karl Blessing, a Nazi who had controlled an army of slave labourers in Germany's concentration camps, returned to the BIS and became president of the Bundesbank Nevertheless, it was felt that someone from the BIS needed to be punished and so in 1945, Emil Puhl, who had been vice president of the Reichsbank and a director of the BIS, was one of the few civilian Nazis to be found guilty of war crimes Puhl had been responsible for moving Nazi gold during the War — knowing that much of the gold had come from prisoners in Germany's various concentration camps Puhl was sentenced to a modest five years in prison but he appears to have served very little of this and in 1950 he was invited by his friend Thomas McKittrick to visit America as his guest Puhl, a Nazi economist, director of the BIS and the Reichsbank had been McKittrick's go-between with the Nazis

The Americans and the British wanted the Bank for International Settlements to be dissolved after the end of the War but instead, it went from strength to strength In 1954, the European Coal and Steel Community (the forerunner of the European Union) asked the United States for a loan of \$100 million In-

40% interest at 62%,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

evitably, the loan was arranged with the help of the BIS — the bank which had worked closely with the Nazis during World War II

Legally untouchable and existing outside all jurisdictions, the BIS was created to act as the central bank for central bankers It is disturbing to realise that the

BIS is still the most powerful financial institution in the world though many politicians, economists and bankers have never even heard of it

The BIS has been at the centre of financial events since the end of World War II

1941

In many ways, 1941 was the most significant year of the Second World War. It was in 1941 that the Allies began to put time and effort into post-war planning. Roosevelt produced his Four Freedoms in January 1941, and the Anglo-American Atlantic Charter was published in that year. It was also in that year (after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour ~ which actually came as no surprise to anyone) that Roosevelt produced his draft for the public Declaration of the United Nations. Preparatory work was done by Alger Hiss who was a communist and a Soviet spy as well as being a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. The document declared that the 26 states which had signed were fighting 'to defend life, liberty, independence, and religious freedom and to preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as in other lands'. The document was finally published on 1st January 1942 with the four great powers (the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and China). It started first and 22 lesser states followed in alphabetical order. De Gaulle's France was excluded from the list so as not to recognise it as a government.

And thus was born the United Nations, and, ironically, the beginning of the end of life, liberty, independence and religious freedom.

The United States had refused to join the League of Nations after World War I because it wasn't allowed to have veto power over decisions (the US has always refused to join any judicial, economic or diplomatic institution unless it has veto power) and the US only agreed to join the UN on condition that it had the power of veto. (And, of course, the US has veto power over the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund - which effectively means that America controls these institutions.)

Because the US has veto power, the United Nations cannot punish American war crimes (the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam or the use of depleted uranium

40% of the world's oil).

THEIR DEFENDING PLAN

(in Iraq and Afghanistan for example) and cannot punish America for the theft of land, gold and resources or the breaking of promises. (President Putin has described America as 'non-agreement-capable'.)

Today, America creates sanctions against other countries for no other reason than that the country being sanctioned has a policy which doesn't match American views. So, for example, the US has introduced sanctions against Uganda because it doesn't approve of Uganda's policy on lesbians and gays, etc.

1943

It is generally thought that America helped Britain win the Second World War by providing ships, fuel, food and so on. But things weren't quite that simple.

The provision of arms and other help was a lend-lease scheme In 1943, President Truman said 'If Britain cannot pay us dollars for petroleum needed by her and cannot, by reason of a shipping shortage or other situation, procure the petroleum she needs from the petroleum she controls in Asia, South America and the Dutch East Indies, consideration should be given as to whether she might not pay for the petroleum obtained from us by transferring to us her ownership of an equivalent value of foreign petroleum reserves or of the English held securities of the corporations having title to such reserves'

And that is what happened

During the Second World War, the US opened up Britain and its Empire with

a 'your money or your life' offer — knowing that Britain was desperately in need By 1945, the US claimed \$20 billion from Britain — leaving Britain close to being bankrupt It seems that American politicians (or at least some of them) have never been able to forget or forgive the fact that their country was once one of Britain's colonies

The US insisted that Britain join the International Monetary Fund (on America's terms) and demanded access to Britain's foreign markets The terms of the loan which had helped Britain during the War stopped Britain devaluing sterling until 1949, and that forced Britain's balance of payments into deficit Sterling became a satellite currency of the American dollar

What happened to Britain during and after the Second World War has happened to many other countries around the world Loans are used to take control of assets and the bankers are the only winners

America was the big winner in World War II, Germany did very well financially and Britain was the big loser

40 is less than book 63%,

THEIR DEFENDING PLAN

1944

At the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, two thoroughly evil financial organisations were set up the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, The two organisations were set up by a couple of deeply unpleasant men Harry Dexter White (a communist and almost certainly a Russian spy) and John Maynard

Keynes (a British economist who believed that governments could and should spend money they didn't have)

The first president of the World Bank was a Nazi lover called John McCloy In her book The Shocking History of the EU, Zina Cohen explains that McCloy was the banker who helped war criminals (who had made huge amounts of money out of concentration camp slave labour) to avoid unpleasantness at the end of the War McCloy also helped set up the United Nations and was, without a doubt, one of the nastiest villains of the 20th century

Both these organisations are based in Washington

The president of the World Bank is elected and somehow always manages to

be American As I write, the President of the World Bank is Ajay Banga who was previously head of Mastercard.

So that things don't look bad, the president of the IMF is not usually an American but that doesn't make any difference to anything Both organisations are effectively controlled by and for American banks and financiers and whatever it might say in their constitutions, their real aims are to ensure that really, horrible rich people get even richer (for doing absolutely nothing of value) while poor people around the world (and poor and middle class people in America and Europe) struggle, work hard, get poorer and die as soon as they have stopped doing useful work That's the plan and it's working out very nicely The World Bank is officially two banks (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association) and three other or

gansations But the conglomerate is known as the World Bank Since the World Bank was created, the US policy has been to secure foreign

markets for farmers and for industry Grains and meat have long been an essential part of the US trade balance and both are used as weapons In the fight for global supremacy US officials have led the World Bank to lend countries money for building ports, road building and other infrastructure and to promote the growing of crops such as palm oil, bananas, spices and rubber which don't compete with US farm products Small farms go out of business as huge conglomerates take over the land And, of course, the countries producing these

TSS led in bank 63%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

products have to import (usually from America) the essential food supplies they need Countries are pushed to hire US engineers and construction companies in order to produce these exports and they then see their earnings siphoned off with foreign owned companies (beholden to American banks) ending up with all the income Local taxpayers are expected to pay back the cost of the construction work demanded by the US and facilitated by the World Bank

The World Bank's policy of supporting large scale businesses (such as Monsanto-Bayer which is infamous for its policy of taking out patents on seeds which have been used by families for generations and thereby putting small farmers out of business) at the expense of small scale farmers has been widely enticed It is, however, supported by the US Agency for International Development, the British, Dutch and Danish governments and the Gates Foundation

1947

The globalists love creating new organisations designed to help create a world government They obviously feel that having lots of organisations with the same aim means that their ambition will be more speedily fulfilled

In 1947, the World Federalist Association was formed by a couple of members of the Council for Foreign Relations - Norman Cousins and James P Warburg (a member of the family which had helped set up America's Federal Reserve System) The aim of the World Federalist Association is to turn the United Nations into a world government through a world court, a world income tax and an

international peace force (The United Nations describes its army as a Peace keeping Force Not everyone would agree with this name UN troops helped a communist called Patrice Lumumba take over the Congo and slaughter innocent men, Women and children in hospitals in the early 1960s }

1949

NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) was created in 1949 as a way to halt the spread of Soviet power in Europe Today, NATO is pretty well controlled by the United States, with the other members doing what they are told, America is the big rock star and the other countries in NATO are session musicians providing backing music NATO consists of dozens of committees and a huge military bureaucracy In 2022, NATO backed Ukraine in its fight with Russia and created (for political reasons) a designer war Ukraine was not (and is not)

a member of NATO and there was no logical reason for NATO to be involved in

Zhukov's role in the G44,

THEIR SECRET FLYING PLAN

the war In the spring and summer of 2023, it was announced that NATO would send depleted uranium shells and cluster bombs to Ukraine to be used in the war These actions turned all the leading politicians of the countries involved in NATO into war criminals

1954

It is impossible to consider the plan for a world government without mentioning the Bilderbergers

I have been writing about the Bilderbergers for decades, and like most other writers I've never been able to find out much about them Although taxpayers around the world always pay for their security, the Bilderbergers and the Bilderberger delegates all keep their meetings very secret And they naturally label as paranoid, and as conspiracy theorists, anyone who suggests that there might be something ever so slightly suspicious about a bunch of politicians, bankers, officials, intelligence agents, war criminals (I can name at least one war criminal who has attended), media tycoons and industrialists holding regular secret meetings to discuss the future of the world Journalists who dare to try to find out what is going on, what the meetings are about and the names of the participants quickly find the meaning of the word 'secrecy' The CIA and MI5 could take lessons in secrecy from the Bilderbergers

You might think that having media tycoons at the Bilderberger meetings would mean that tidbits of news might leak out occasionally But you'd be very naive to think that Consider this quote from Bilderberger David Rockefeller 'We are grateful to The Washington Post, the New York Times, Time magazine and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings and respected their promise of discretion for almost forty years It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subject to the bright lights of publicity during those years But the world is now more sophisticated and prepared to march towards a world government The super-national sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national auto-determination practised in past centuries'

Named after the hotel where the conspirators first met in May 1954 (the Hotel de Bilderberg in Holland) the group was created by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, a powerful Dutch businessman, a friend of the Rothschilds and a former Nazi SS storm trooper who described his work for Hitler as a lot of fun and yet somehow managed to remain an eminent member of Dutch society after

BS is left with book 65%,

THEIR EFFING PLAN

the end of World War II Interestingly, Bernhard was a Nazi: at the same time as Klaus Schwab's father Schwab, of course, is the founder of the World Economic Forum (The links between the Nazis and those who want a world government are never ending) No attempt has ever been made to hide the fact that the intention of the Bilderbergers is to create a World government or as it has also been described a 'new world order'

(As an aside, the Oxford Dictionary of English describes a conspiracy as 2 secret plan for a group to do something unlawful Since the Bilderbergers are nothing if not secret, and since their plans do not have any legal authority but do impact on every citizen in the world, it is clear that the Bilderbergers are conspirators (This fact rather weakens the labelling of those who wrote about them as 'conspiracy theorists' The conspiracy is not a theory it is clearly a fact)

Much is discussed at Bilderberg meetings, many decisions about our future are reached and many plans are put into action There is much discussion of the usual issues such as world government, climate change, China, Russia, Brexit and the weaponisation of social media The main aim is to create a one world government with one central currency and one bank and one army However, although the decisions and the plans concern us all, the Bilderbergers insist on keeping all their deliberations quite secret Nevertheless it is sometimes possible to trace events back to their meetings For example, after one meeting (which was attended by Henry Kissinger, the U.S President's advisor on foreign affairs) President Nixon opened up trade with China and devalued the dollar Ponce Bernhard had previously boasted that one of the subjects of Bilderberger meetings was to bring about 'change in the world-role of the United States' There may be some who find it surprising that the American media, usually intensely patriotic and defensive, did not seem to mind one whit that an anonymous group of power brokers was intent on changing the world-role of the United States!

1959

The Council for Foreign Relations has controlled American foreign policy for many years In 1959 the CFR published this statement 'The US must strive to build a new international order which must respond to world aspirations for peace and for social and economic change'

1962

27 is left in bank 65%,

THEIR "EFFING PLAN

It is generally believed that the World Wide Web was created by an Englishman, Tim Berners-Lee, but the internet was created some years before that

American military experts were warned that one Soviet missile could destroy America's entire telephone system. An alternative was clearly required and in 1962, a scientist in America named J.C.R. Licklider proposed that a network of computers be set up that could talk to one another even if the telephone system was destroyed. In 1965, another scientist found a way to send information from one computer to another using a system called 'packet switching'. In 1969, the first message was sent from one computer to another. Each computer was the size of a small house.

During the 1970s, the network grew and by the end of the decade a large number of computers were involved.

And then in 1991, Tim Berners-Lee, who was working in Switzerland, introduced the World Wide Web. Instead of being used as a mailing system, the World Wide Web could be used to store information that anyone could retrieve. So Berners-Lee created what we now think of as the 'internet'.

And in 1992, Congress in the US, decided that the Web could be used for commercial purposes (For the record that was the year when I first had a presence on the internet.) America has effectively controlled the internet ever since then. Without the internet, it would have been impossible for the conspirators to develop effective social credit systems or digital currencies.

We are constantly encouraged to believe that the internet has made the world a better place. But has it? It has taken away our freedom and created new stresses and pressures for everyone. Social media and social credit have taken us, with quiet certainty, towards the quiet death of the spirit. And surely it was easier to find a workman, for example, when you could look up local tradesmen in the telephone directory instead of having to plough through pages of misleading advertising and trying to decide which of the companies on the internet are genuinely offering a local service.

More importantly, the conspirators love the internet. It gives them complete control. It has removed all our privacy. All the major internet companies (Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Apple, etc, etc) will give your data to whichever government asks for it. Governments everywhere can see all your emails, chats, all your videos, all your pictures, all your contacts and all the websites you have visited. This intrusion began when Obama was President of the US (he gave government officials the right to monitor compliance and

This is book 664,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

obedience and initiated the basis of social credit schemes in the US) and it has gradually become more intense. Governments claim that they have to look at what people are saying to help them deal with national emergencies such as the fake climate emergency which will always do very nicely, thank you, when any government department is looking for an excuse to do something intrusive. Since May 2023, the Federal Reserve in the US has been able to track everything

you do with your money, and President Biden has been pushing for the IRS to be able to monitor everyone's bank accounts Today, governments all around the world have established blueprints for controlling all their citizens and they are going to centralise everything, control all payment systems and give themselves the power to control how you earn, save and spend your money All thanks to the internet (In Canada, Trudeau used the 1988 Emergencies Act to freeze 266 bank accounts belonging to Canadians who had donated money to help the truckers protesting about mandatory vaccinations Bank accounts of American citizens were frozen too.)

Without the internet there would be no social credit system The internet has,

indeed, been essential to the fraud that's the Great Reset Allowing and encouraging anonymous comments and reviews was always difficult to understand until you realised how essential these have been for breaking down society suppressing and demonising truth-tellers and destroying humanity Governments everywhere have used their intelligence services to dominate the internet In the US, the CIA has been dominant and in the UK the British army deployed its 77th Brigade to assist the security services MI5, Special Branch and GCHQ

None of the things that has happened in recent years could have happened without the internet and there is no doubt that the internet has become the most powerful weapon against the people and against freedom But things can get worse, much worse If and when the authorities decide to insist that those using the internet have a digital licence to allow them access, the future will be bleak indeed for those denied such a licence They will not be allowed to buy food or electricity In June 2023, I reported that shoppers who wanted to buy food at an Aldi 'shop and go' store had to download an app before they were allowed into the store Anyone without a smart phone and the Aldi app couldn't even enter the store I wrote at the time that 'If we allow Aldi to get away with this then our war with the conspirators is over We are well and truly inside the Great Reset Anyone who shops at Aldi is a collaborator — aiding and abetting the totalitarian conspirators who want to take over our lives' But few people took any notice or

TS cles lews book G7,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

recognised the problem or thought about the millions of mainly elderly citizens who don't even own a smart phone Thousands love the convenience of their smart phones and their ubiquitous apps

Politicians, commentators and computer companies claim that the internet, smart phones and other developments have all improved life But that depends on how you define 'improved'

Are children better off playing games on computer consoles or spending hours every day keeping their Facebook profiles up to date and worrying about their social media ratings? Today's children feel delight when they receive an approving tick after re-posting a message written by someone else Is that the new version of pride and self-satisfaction? (I have little doubt that the obsession with ratings on the internet is part of the plan to accustom us to a world in which we receive ratings for everything we do The step from social media to social credit

1s a Very small one)

Social media has become so powerful that many now censor themselves for fear of being the victim of an organised attack by the mob (or, rather, the small

number of woke collaborators who control social media) and losing their jobs, their money, their homes, and their reputations. There is no free speech and no debate. Social media has created a world in which people in cliques spend much of their time hurling abuse at one another. The world has become a series of factions - communists masquerading as liberals, transgendered individuals and their enthusiasts demanding ever expanding rights, gays demanding more of something, anything, black lives matter campaigners thinking up reasons to protest, pro-vaccine enthusiasts abusing those who question the safety and efficacy of vaccination programmes and so on.

And with internet robots, AI and government agencies adding to the smorgasbord of abuse, it is hardly surprising that in every country in the world fear has become the plat du jour. Mobile phones have, for many children, replaced friendships, family and schoolwork. Young people no longer live their lives in a natural way. They appear selfish, entitled and demanding and they overshare because they are constantly performing. They live in dread of the thumbs down buttons, the anonymous abuse, the disapproval from those within or without. The social media sites offer fame and fortune to the tiny few, and destruction and despair to the many. Dishonesty and hysteria are deliberately encouraged. Loaded weapons in their hands would do less harm than smart phones. Facebook alone has three billion users (I've never even been allowed onto the site

25 cs lel in baok G74,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

for I was told that I was too dangerous to their community to be allowed to join. The lockdowns, the social distancing and the mask wearing regulations broke their spirit. In countries around the world clinical depression is now endemic among teenagers and undergraduates. Fears are created and exaggerated on a daily basis. Self-harm and suicide are endemic too. Research shows that children who spend a quarter of their waking hours staring at their smart phones (an average sort of level of obsession) do not develop mentally. Mask wearing slowed development still further. The combination of smart phones, lockdowns, social distancing and masks has caused anxiety, depression and aggression. Boys tend to watch violent video games and become aggressive. Girls tend to watch fashion videos on TikTok and their ambitions revolve around that and similar channels. It is not surprising that at school they absorb the garbage they are fed about climate change and blame the coming catastrophe on their elders. All this is being micromanaged by the collaborators on behalf of the conspirators. It is behaviour therapy designed to create anger and illness. Schools now dish out iPads in preference to text books and exercise books, though there is as big a need for health warnings on iPads as there is for warnings on cigarette packets. Such online legislation as exists is designed not to protect the innocent and vulnerable and naive but to crush free speech and truth telling which is considered dangerous.

The authorship of the Report from Iron Mountain has always been hidden behind the pseudonym 'John Doe' but there is no doubt that the Iron Mountain report is entirely genuine (The establishment and the mainstream media have long argued that it is fake, and controlled opposition who have infiltrated the alternative or independent media have, for obvious reasons, also tried to dismiss the Iron Mountain report) However, John Kenneth Galbraith, the Harvard economist and a long-term member of the establishment confirmed that the report was genuine and admitted that he was involved in its preparation In the Iron Mountain Report, Galbraith and his colleagues explained that war, or the threat of war, was a good thing from the point of view of governments because it helped to convince the people of their right to rule They also admitted that war allowed for more expenditure (on arms) and helped create a more stable political structure

That is the book, so,

THEIR DEFENDING PLAN

And when they looked for a substitute for war (or, rather, an 'add-on') Galbraith and his colleagues agreed that 'the substitute unless it provides a believable life-and-death threat it will not serve the socially organising function of war'

The writers of the Special Study Group (who produced the Iron Mountain Report) also noted that 'Economic surrogates for war must meet two principal criteria They must be 'wasteful', in the common sense of the word, and they must operate outside the normal supply-demand system A corollary that should be obvious is that the magnitude of the waste must be sufficient to meet the needs of a particular society An economy as advanced and complex as our own requires the planned average destruction of not less than 10% of gross national product'

The Special Study Group examined a number of substitutes for a traditional war and considered a war on poverty and 'the threat of an out-of-our world invasion threat' and their report includes these words 'It may be, for instance, that gross pollution of the environment can eventually replace the possibility of mass destruction by nuclear weapons as the principal apparent threat to the survival of the species Poisoning of the air, and of the principal sources of food and water supply is already well advanced, and at first glance would seem promising in this respect, it constitutes a threat that can be dealt with only through social organisation and political power But from present indications it will be a generation to a generation and a half before environmental pollution, however severe, will be sufficiently menacing, on a global scale, to offer a possible basis for a solution'

In a section entitled 'Substitutes for the Functions of War' Galbraith and his colleagues concluded 'However unlikely some of the possible alternate enemies we have mentioned may seem, we must emphasize that one must be found, of

credible quality and magnitude, if a transition to peace is ever to come about without social disintegration'

And they add 'It is more probable, in our judgement, that such a threat will

have to be invented, rather than developed' and, in summary, note that 'what is involved here, in a sense, is the quest for William James' 'moral equivalent of war'

Finally, the report's author gave readers some background information. He wrote 'The general idea for this kind of study dates back at least to 1961. It

23 million in 1963,

THEIR EFFORTING PLAN

started with some of the new people who came in with the Kennedy Administration, mostly, I think with McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk'

The enthusiasm for war (or some substitute) as a means of controlling the population has been espoused by other groups

In their book, *Imminent: Agenda 21*, Dean and Jill Henderson report that in

1909, the trustees of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation for International Peace concluded 'There are no known means more efficient than war, assuming the objective is altering the life of an entire people. How do we involve the United States in a war?

1968

The Club of Rome was founded in 1969. It is described as a global think tank, and although it is without doubt global and doubtless a tank, there doesn't seem to be much 'think' involved. The club follows the thinking of Malthus, and produced a report entitled *The Limits to Growth* which dealt with the rapidly growing world population and the allegedly finite resource supplies.

Members of the Club of Rome, who believe in sustainability and have links to the WEF, have claimed that the planet earth can only provide resources for one billion people, and so over six billion must die. Representatives of the Club have given many lectures and been given many awards for their work on overpopulation and climate change - both of which members seem to believe are real problems.

The Club of Rome has a sister organisation the Club of Madrid which, you will be surprised to hear, supports sustainability and global governance. Members include Bill Clinton, Gordon Brown, a vast number of other former presidents and prime ministers and UN Secretary General António Guterres.

1968

Reducing the world's population had been a popular theme among the globalists for some years but it was in 1968 that the argument about the world being crowded first became a popular topic in the media. That was when Paul Ehrlich published his sensational book *The Population Bomb* in which he warned that the world was vastly overpopulated. Ehrlich had obtained a doctorate after studying parasitic mites and the book was originally published by the Sierra Club with Ballantine Books.

Ehrlich was always happy to offer journalists a prediction or two

Gre mis Lett in wouk 69%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

In 1967, writing in a British magazine called New Scientist, Ehrlich warned that the 'battle to feed humanity is over, and predicted that between 1970 and 1985, the world would undergo vast famines. He recommended putting luxury taxes on baby foods and diapers in order to discourage people from having babies, and advocated tying food aid in developing countries to population control.

Ehrlich got masses of publicity and helped found Zero Population Growth which advocated legalised abortion, government supported birth control, tax incentives for smaller families and a limit of two children per family (as was introduced in China). He argued that if population growth were maintained at its then rate, there would be 60 million billion people on earth within 900 years — with 100 people for every square foot of land and sea surface. His prediction took absolutely no account of famines, disease and soon. He said that the world's population would continue to grow as long as the birth rate exceeded the death rate and offered two solutions: finding a way to lower the birth rate or raising the death rate (through war, famine or pestilence).

Today, the conspirators still claim that it is necessary to reduce the size of the global population, and governments everywhere claim they are concerned not just by the size of their ageing populations but also by the overall size of their populations. And so there are global plans to cut the overall world population down from its current figure of around eight billion to a much lower number. The figure of 500 million (just half a billion) is widely quoted as the number of people that the earth can comfortably hold. This implies somehow getting rid of seven and a half billion people. All of this is based on a baseless tower of lies. Planet earth is perfectly capable of providing more than enough food for eight, ten or twelve billion people or even more, and although there are clearly pockets of overcrowding, it is difficult to accept that the world is over-crowded. The certainty is that much of the food is in the wrong place at the wrong time (because of politics, greed and faulty logistics) and many people are also encouraged to crowd into huge cities when there would be plenty of room for them if they were allowed or encouraged to live in or around smaller communities.

It seems to me that the conspirators have two fundamental depopulation policies: 'End global poverty by killing all the poor people' and 'End disease by killing all the sick'.

Their whole cruel philosophy is actually based on a myth.

As I pointed out earlier, it was Thomas Malthus who, in 1798, first suggested

that the world's population was growing too large and that the Earth's resources

Biri tett ni bouk 7C*,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

wouldn't be able to cope. Gloomy, Malthus predicted starvation, misery and

war

But the evidence shows that Malthus was wrong. The world population was two billion a century ago and today it is eight billion but the proportion of people living in abject poverty has fallen from 90% to 10%.

The irony is that of anyhew, the problem is that the population is growing too slowly. Population growth has slowed rapidly in the last half a century and in western countries in particular the percentage of elderly and dependent citizens has risen rapidly as a proportion of the total population.

There are, in short, too few working age citizens around. The result is that governments are introducing policies ruthlessly designed to kill off the elderly and the sick (in other words the 'dependent'). And the situation is getting worse. Governments and councils are committed to paying pensions that they cannot

possibly ever pay. It is still not widely appreciated but pensions are not paid out of the taxes paid by those workers but by the taxes paid by the generation currently working. This has never before caused serious problems but today's younger generation seems to have taken exception to the way things work and have developed an antipathy towards the elderly which I find rather sad.

I first warned about this huge demographic problem in my book *Health Scandal* which was published in 1988 and recently republished.

1969

In 1969, Dr Jose M R. Delgado published a book called *Physical Control of the Mind: Toward a Psychocivilised Society*. The book is as terrifying as the title suggests but Delgado has become increasingly significant in recent years with his work enjoying something of a renaissance.

This is what I wrote about his work in my book *Paper Doctors* in 1976: 'In the 1950s, Dr Delgado of the Yale University School of Medicine showed

that two cats, normally quite friendly, could be made to fight fiercely if electrodes implanted in the brain were given impulses. Even when it continually lost its fights, the smaller of the two cats continued to be aggressive when stimulated. In one dramatic experiment, Dr Delgado wired a bull with electrodes and then planted himself in the middle of a bullring with a cape and a small radio transmitter. The bull charged but was stopped by Dr Delgado pressing a button on his transmitter. The bull screeched to a halt inches away from its target. Dr Delgado has reported that 'Animals with implanted electrodes in their brains

Barrie de Witt Te,

THEIR TERRIFYING PLAN

have been made to perform a variety of responses with predictable reliability as if they were electronic toys under human control.'

Similar experiments have been performed with human beings. The patients selected had all proved dangerous and had shown that they had uncontrollable

tempers By electronic stimulation every patient was controlled More detailed accounts of these experiments can be read in *Physical Control of the Mind* by JMR Delgado'

Delgado claimed that it was possible to control human behaviour in a number of ways

By implanting electrodes deep in the brain of mental patients and preventing or provoking certain kinds of behaviour by stimulating brain centres with tiny electric charges

Implanting tiny tubes in the brain and releasing into them drugs which change the activity of brain centres and hence behaviour

Having a direct line of communication from a brain to a computer and back to the brain without having information pass through the sense organs

Delgado reported that it was possible to control behaviour secretly because there are no visible wires or electrodes. Day and night supervision is possible without even touching the individual

And thus was born, over 50 years ago, the idea of taking complete control the behaviour of human beings

1970

In April of 1970, US President Richard Nixon announced the first Earth Day and that same year he established the Environmental Protection Agency

The then UN Secretary General, U Thant, was one of the first of many to offer a scaremongering prediction when he wrote that 'For the first time in the history of mankind, there is arising a crisis of worldwide proportions involving developed and developing countries alike —the crisis of human environment it is becoming apparent that if current trends continue, the future of life on earth could be endangered'

Since Thant issued this warning, pretty much the same warning has been issued by every political leader every media commentator and a Swedish school principal

And in that same month in 1970, an article by George F Kennan appeared in the journal *Foreign Affairs* (the quarterly publication of the Council on Foreign

Relations)

THEIR ERF LYING PLAN

Kennan argued that the 'war' on pollution would have to be international since 'the ecology of the planet is not arranged in national compartments' and that 'since this is an area in which no sovereign government can make these determinations, some international authority must ultimately do so'

We were, in 1970, clearly heading towards some form of world government,

and Kennan, the father of the Cold War between the US and the USSR, suggested a multilateral treaty or convention with an instrument of enforcement managed by 'true international servants with 'dedication to the work at hand

Sadly, Nixon's scheme was not regarded as a huge success for two decades after Earth Day had been founded, one of the originators, Dennis Hayes, commented that 'Twenty years after Earth Day, those of us who set out to change the world are poised on the threshold of utter failure ' And Ken Weiner, who was Jimmy Carter's Deputy Director of the Council for Environmental Quality said 'It has been said war is too important to be left to the generals Some are wondering if environmental quality is too important to be left to the environmentalists '

Not that this mattered much.

The seeds had been planted And we were moving steadily towards the Great

Reset

1971

By 1971, America was spending so much on its military adventures that Nixon abandoned the link between gold and the US dollar Prior to this date, countries had been able to convert \$35 worth of dollars into an ounce of gold De-linking dollar from the gold opened the way for dollar hegemony America became the world's banker America could print dollars all day long and use them to buy anything it wanted

The neoliberals have, since then, used the dollar ruthlessly, buying land, minerals, public infrastructure, public companies, housing and goods with money they produced without restriction

When America didn't need to hold enough gold to cover their dollars, the printing presses could run 24 hours a day And eventually, of course, the Federal Reserve didn't even bother to have money printed It just manufactured another few billion dollars out of thin air

1971

Eres Lett in work TM,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

1971 was also the year when a Professor B F Skinner published a book called Beyond Freedom and Dignity (Dr Skinner's work on the book was paid for with a \$283,000 grant from the US Government's National Institute of Mental Health) Skinner, a social scientist, argued that if the world is to save any part of its resources for the future, it must reduce not only consumption but the number of consumers

The reviewer for Time magazine pointed out that Skinner's message was that 'we can no longer afford freedom, and so it must be replaced with control over man, his conduct and his culture This thesis, proposed not by a writer of science fiction but by a man of science raises the spectre of a 1984 Orwellian society that might really come to pass'

Skinner attacked individual freedom and dignity and predicted that Western culture might be replaced with the more disciplined culture of the Soviet Union or China 'If you insist that individual rights are the summum bonum' then the whole structure of society falls down'

The frightening thing is that Skinner's arguments and predictions were (and are) taken immensely seriously And his work is now revered by the globalists who want to reduce the world population by billions and to take total control of every aspect of our lives

1971

The World Economic Forum (pompously and arrogantly announced as 'Committed to Improving the State of the World') was set up in 1971 by a man called Klaus Schwab, though the organisation wasn't called that then When Schwab began what was to become the WEF he had an endowment of just 25,000 Swiss francs in a bank account

The first Davos meeting of what was then called the European Management Symposium, lasted two weeks and involved 450 participants, including chief executives and senior managers from top companies and 50 faculty members from business schools

Things then moved quickly

The chairman of the second Davos meeting was supposed to be Herman Abs

who had to cancel at the last minute but this link gives us a clear insight into the background of the WEF

Ems teletrans worked 72%,

THEIR REFINANCING PLAN

As Zima Cohen explains in her book The Shocking History of the EU, Abs was a bank director who helped Hitler enormously by forcibly purchasing Jewish banks at low prices The money was then used to build the Nazi war machine

During the Second World War, Abs was a member of a secret group formed in 1943 and known as the Committee for Foreign Economic Affairs - a group of bankers and businessmen who met to discuss Germany's future after the end of the War

After the War, a friend of his, Charles Gunston of the Bank of England, asked Abs to help rebuild German banking - though Abs had been arrested as a war criminal and sentenced to death in his absence Gunston worked for the Bank of England as the manager of the German desk and was a senior official in the British occupational authority after the War Gunston cared nothing about the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis All he wanted to do was to help rebuild the German banks To this end he recruited Abs who was high on a list of Nazi officials wanted for war crimes Gunston protected Abs to help Germany rebuild its banking system ready to continue Hitler's work Thanks to help from his friends at the Bank of England, Abs was not executed or even imprisoned, and by 1948, he was deputy head of the Reconstruction Loan Corporation and President of the Bank Deutsche Lander Unbelievably, it was then Abs who decided which Ger-

man companies should receive the billions of dollars provided as Marshall Aid. And for decades afterwards, Abs had a powerful role in Germany. He was one of a number of former Nazis who helped create the organisation which became the European Union. (For more details of how the European Union was created please read 'The Shocking History of the EU' by Zina Cohen)

Until the mid-1990s, Abs was chairman of the Deutsche Bank and his Nazi background was ignored. The Independent, a British newspaper, described Abs as the outstanding German banker of his time and quietly ignored his work with IG Farben and Kontinental-Oil, where he had knowingly employed slave labour in the concentration camps. Nor did they mention the money he had helped steal from Jewish people and banks. And this was the man Schwab asked to chair the second Davos meeting of his new organisation. It has frequently been rumoured that Schwab's father was a Nazi who was an associate of Hitler but, of course, the fact checkers deny this.

The honorary sponsor of the third Davos meeting in 1973 was Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands (a former Nazi and the founder of the Bilderberger meetings) and the Commission of the European Communities 'renewed its pa-

Eris Lett a1 wouk T34,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

tronage' An Italian industrialist delivered a speech summing up 'The Limits of Growth', a book that had been commissioned by the Club of Rome and published in 1972. Participants drafted a code of ethics based on Klaus Schwab's stakeholder concept.

It was clear early on that the WEF was very close to the European Commission of the EU with two meetings held at the European Commission in Brussels.

Today, the WEF describes itself as a public interest not for profit organisation based in Switzerland [it has offices in New York (USA), San Francisco (USA), Tokyo (Japan), Mumbai (India) and Beijing (China)]. In 2022 the WEF reported an income of 383,000,000 Swiss francs in fees and other funding. Out of this 130 million Swiss francs was spent on staff, with Schwab himself reportedly being paid more than \$1,000,000 a year (plus, allegedly, rewards from associated companies). Around 252 million Swiss francs was spent on office and activity' (It is interesting that many of those working with the conspirators in some way have become extraordinarily wealthy. Tony Blair, for example, was a modestly paid politician for most of his working life but is now a multimillionaire. The staff of environmental and green charities are often enormously well-paid and enjoy first class travel around the world.) The WEF does not pay any federal taxes.

An organisation which, just a dozen years ago was regarded as having no influence and was known merely as the organiser of an annual shindig where virtue signalling celebrities such as pop star Bono (famous to many for his tax avoidance schemes and hypocrisy) could rub shoulders with politicians and industrialists eager to be photographed with famous people, and which was not taken seriously by many people, is now one of the most powerful bodies in the world. It has taken over from the far more secretive Bilderbergers as the face (and voice) of the conspirators.

Schwab himself was born in Germany in 1938 and acquired a variety of academic qualifications before founding the WEF in 1971 when he was just 33 years-old. The WEF was originally called the European Management Forum but changed its name to the rather grander and more ambitious World Economic Forum in 1987.

Just prior to founding the European Management Forum, Schwab had been a member of the Managing Board of a medium sized Swiss manufacturing company with which his father appears to have been associated. Today the WEF claims to have more than 600 employees but I would describe Schwab as (like

Ses tele nm bouk THO,

THEIR “ERR FLYING PLAN

Charles III and Tony Blair) as a fixer and a pimp for the conspirators. None of them seems to me to be serious players.

There is no record on the WEF's website of how Schwab acquired the money to set up what is described (on its own website) as ‘the foremost global multi-stakeholder organisation’ nor is it clear how, within three years, his organisation had been able to invite political leaders from around the world to a conference in Davos.

In 1971, the same year that he founded the forerunner of the WEF, Schwab wrote a book called *Modern Enterprise Management in Mechanical Engineering* (it seems unlikely that the royalties from this enabled him to found the WEF). There have been rumours that his mother was related to the Rothschild family and that his father was close to Adolf Hitler but both these suggestions have been dismissed by fact checkers (though we should remember that fact checkers claimed that the covid vaccine was effective and perfectly safe). In that early book, Schwab argued that the management of a modern enterprise must serve both the shareholders and the corporate stakeholders — with the stakeholders including employees, customers, government, creditors, local communities and financiers. Schwab has worked with the United Nations for many decades and has advised various UN bodies on sustainable development issues. Schwab has warned that there would be much anger in the world as the conspirators’ plans unfolded, and is best known for warning citizens everywhere ‘you will own nothing and be happy’.

As an aside, it is curious, is it not, how the phrase ‘you will own nothing and be happy’, which is believed to have originated with the World Economic Forum, can be compared to the principles of the communist revolution as described in Karl Marx’s ‘Communist Manifesto’? Marx wrote that in order to establish a socialist dictatorship, and to obtain total control over the proletariat, the communists would have to eliminate all rights to private property, destroy all religion, which Marx famously described as ‘the opiate of the people’ and dissolve the family unit which was seen as a threat to the ability of the State to obtain total control over people's lives. (Today, under the Great Reset, traditional religions will be replaced by a faith in nature as defined by the United Nations and promoted by the consortium of bankers who are managing the global economy). Astonishingly, the leaders of traditional religions have accepted the change, and the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury seem happy to commit themselves

and their followers to the pseudoscience in preference to the traditional teach-

Sis tele nm bouk To,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

mings their rehgiions have espoused. It doesn’t seem to matter to them that the science of chmate change 1s provably fake, they are wedded to, and happy to influence, the blasphemies promoted by the rabid environmentalists In 2023, a WEF advisor and establishment enthusiast called Yuval Noah Harari claimed that AI could create a new religion and a new bible, thereby making AI the new god This 1s, presumably, the proposed replacement for orthodox, tradihonal rehlgnon We already know that AI will bnng an endless encyclopaedia of hes to the internet, now it seems, AI will also bring us a brand new fake rehgiion)

Actually, as Gary Ailen and Larry Abraham point out in their excellent book None Dare Call It Conspiracy, which was pubhshed in 1971 the Cormmunist Manifesto was merely an update of the revolutionary plans proposed 70 years earher by Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Order of IHumuinat: Today we can see the WEF, the Bilderbergers and the other conspirators following the recommendations made by Marx, and previously by the Order of Illuminati

Meetings of the WEF are held annually tn Davos and participants arrive from all over the world (many of them in private jets) to discuss the threat of climate change

Most dangerously, perhaps, the WEF has what it pompously calls a ‘Young Global Leaders Scheme’ which trains ruthless young men and women to be puppets of the cabal Many of the graduates get jobs in politics, the green movement, charity management and so on, and Schwab boasts that ‘graduates’ from what might by some be seen as a brainwashing programme can be found in high places everywhere The boast 1s justified and WEF followers can be found in many governments Sunak in the UK, Trudeau in Canada and Macron in France all have links to the WEF

The whole organisation reminds me very much of the Scientology cult though, as a replacement for the Bilderbergers and a promotional organisation for the European Union and the United Nations, it 1s infinitely more dangerous and it has influence far greater than would seem justified

1972

The 1970s were a bad time for freedom, and the first meeting of the Trilateral Commission was organised in New York at the estate of David Rockefeller All eight American representatives at the founding members were, unsurpnisingly, members of the Council on Foreign Relations, and the purpose of the Tnilateral Commission was officially stated as bringing together representatives from

Sis tele nm bouk To,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

North Amenca, Western Europe and Japan to umprove the chances of a smooth and peaceful evolution of the globalsystem At least they didn’t hide the purpose

of the organisation

David Rockefeller first floated the idea of the Trilateral Commission at a meeting of the Bilderberg Group where it proved extremely popular

The formation of the Trilateral Commission had been foreseen by Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Chief who had argued that a world government would probably require two overlapping phases. Part one would involve the United States, Western Europe and Japan forging a community with other advanced countries such as Israel, Mexico and Australia. Part two would extend the links to communist nations.

1972

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) setup the World Heritage Treaty in 1972. The WHT had a committee, of course, and listed procedures for listing cultural 'heritage' sites around the world. The WHT called for cooperation with 'international and national governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)'. As a result of this new organisation's formation, nations around the world suddenly reported that the official 'heritage' sites and local citizens were encouraged to believe that having an area designated a 'heritage site' was an honour to be cherished. Huge areas of land were designated 'heritage' sites with, for example, almost half of New Zealand's South Island being listed as a world heritage site. Huge tracts of land around the world are now so designated.

Once a piece of land is listed as a world heritage site, all local farmers, ranchers and loggers can be excluded, and all development must be stopped with UNESCO effectively acquiring ownership rights.

World heritage sites were set up as a first step towards re-wilding huge areas of the world.

1974

In an article entitled *The Hard Road to World Order* which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* (the house journal of the very powerful Council of Foreign Relations) Richard Gardner wrote that 'If instant world government, (UN) Charter review and a greatly strengthened International Court are not acceptable to the people, what hope for progress is there?'

Estimated in book *5%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

Gardner suggested the following ways to get rid of national sovereignty: A reform of the international monetary system, a rewriting of the ground rules of international trade, subjecting all countries to international surveillance, a steady increase in the resources of agencies such as the World Bank, giving them more power over economic policies, continued strengthening of the global and regional authorities charged with protecting the world's environment, population policies designed to achieve zero population growth, a control of food supplies, a new international control of the world's oceans, new rules and institutions to regulate emerging communications technologies, a limit to conventional weapons and increasing use of UN forces to patrol and supervise.

1976

You might be surprised to hear that re-wilding is not a new concept. The World Wilderness Congress, which began in 1976, claims that it is the 'longest running, public environmental forum to build awareness and support for wilderness'. They claim to have mirrored the process that led to the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility.

When the Fourth World Wilderness Congress met in 1987, delegates were probably delighted to find that the Denver Declaration for Worldwide Conservation had been prepared for them. The founder of the WWC announced that the declaration was the 'new Magna Carta'.

Within a few years, the American Congress had authorised spending over \$1 billion a year on purchasing private taxpayers' property — and locking it away so that no one could waste it by building homes, farms, shops, schools, hospitals or factories on it. In just eleven American states there were already 86 million acres of wilderness and 133 million more acres were already designated for inclusion.

In Australia and Brazil, areas of land designated as suitable to be classified as 'wilderness' were measured in square miles. Over 12 billion acres of land was designated as wilderness areas.

It was at this Congress that it was revealed that United Nations agencies, aid agencies and private NGOs had put together a massive surveillance database called the 'World Wilderness Inventory'. The database had been put together by the Terra Club (a private organisation which was founded in 1892 and is described as an 'environmental organisation').

See also in book TG,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

Among those attending World Wilderness meetings have been David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan bank and Baron Edmund de Rothschild of the Rothschild banking family.

And, you won't be surprised to hear that a World Conservation Bank was proposed to act as an intermediary between developing countries and private banks. Debts and loans would be cooked up and huge areas of land would be transferred to the World Conservation Bank. In other words, the World Conservation Bank would buy loans from developing countries and those countries would collateralise their loans with areas of land which could be designated as wilderness. If the debtor failed to meet their obligations, the WCB and its stockholders would end up owning vast areas of land together with the oil, minerals and other goodies underneath the land.

The world's biggest and most powerful bankers, the Establishment pushing for the New World Order, had been generous enough to find a 'green way' to take ownership of 30% of the world's uncultivated land mass. So, to give just one example, Madagascar's Government swapped thousands of acres of its own land for over \$2 million worth of bad debt.

How wonderfully kind and unselfish of the bankers
And how very simple
You just get a country into debt (by lending them money they can't possibly
pay back) and then you allow them to swap the debt for huge quantities of
land — preferably wild land with lots of valuable goodies hidden underneath the
surface

Governments, NGOs, banks, Green political parties on the fringe of power and
tax exempt foundations had come together to enable very rich and powerful
people to take ownership of vast areas of the world's landmass

Naturally, President Gorbachev of the USSR thought it a splendid idea The
Soviet Union favours a substantive discussion of ways to settle the debt crisis at
multilateral forums,' he said 'including consultations under the auspices of the
United Nations, among heads of governments of debtor and creditor countries '

Are you now beginning to see how everything fits together?
Oh, and you may or may not have guessed that the people proposing that vast
areas of land be classified as 'wilderness' (and not used for building or farming)
just happen to be the same people who claim that the earth is vastly overpopu-
lated

And there's something else

directly not about TGS,

THEIR EFFORTING PLAN

Do you remember the film Goldfinger in which the baddie (Mr Goldfinger)
wanted to destroy the value of America's gold so that the value of HIS gold would
soar in value? Well, you may see the similarity here with what the banks were
planning If they control wilderness areas which are rich in oil and minerals they
don't have to do anything at all with the land to increase the value of their own
holdings It's the Goldfinger principle By taking oil and minerals out of circula-
tion the value of their own holdings will rocket

1989

The New York Times (for many years a propaganda sheet for the globalists and
conspirators) reported in 1989 that Margaret Thatcher (then the British Prime
Minister) had warned that global warming could cause devastating floods and
food shortages, though there was no evidence (scientific or otherwise) for this
prediction Mrs Thatcher called upon the United Nations to complete, by 1992, a
treaty that would require action towards stabilising the world's climate and she
told the General Assembly of the UN that the treaty should be supplemented by
specific, binding agreements regulating the production of gases that trap heat
in the atmosphere Mrs Thatcher added that the restrictions would have to be
'obligatory and their applications carefully monitored'

Mrs Thatcher was effectively repeating the strategy that had been outlined by
George Kennan in an article which had appeared in the journal Foreign Affairs in
1970

There was no evidence for the clam in 1970, there was no evidence for the claim in 1989 and there is no evidence for the claim now

1990

The prediction that it would take a generation to a generation and a half for environmental pollution to be a useful weapon with which to scare the public appears to have been pretty accurate for in 1990, at a conference entitled 'Globe '90', the Seattle Post Intelligencer reported that the former Norwegian prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland had told the audience that 'Environmental destruction is a 'ticking time bomb' that poses a more absolute threat to human survival than nuclear annihilation during the Cold War'

There was no evidence whatsoever for this absurd claim.

1991

Air is Lett 1 pouk T?O,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

The USSR fell apart in 1991 after America had won the Cold War The year before that the World Bank and the IMF had laid out a plan to force Russia's leaders to impose austerity on their people and to give away the nation's assets President Gorbachev naively trusted the US Government and accepted America's offer to help the Soviets privatise their economy so that money could be available to invest in the country

President Bush promised Gorbachev that NATO would not move eastwards if Russia agreed to let East and West Germany integrate However, when Clinton became President he reneged on the deal, broke America's promise and simply reminded Gorbachev that he didn't have a deal in writing. (Michael Hudson, in his book *Destiny of Civilisation* points out that breaking promises and treaties has been American policy since the nation's birth, 'as shown by its dozens of broken treaties with Native American tribes in the 19th century down to its withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran in today's world')

The result of Gorbachev's action was that a favoured few Russian kleptocrats registered public assets in their own names, sold shares to foreign banks and became immensely rich overnight

America became angry when President Putin ended the giveaways, and treated Mikhail Khodorkovsky as a hero for accumulating a fortune of \$15 billion by buying privatisation vouchers and helping himself to oil reserves in Siberia, (Most of the other oligarchs moved to the West, bought huge properties, yachts and football clubs)

Western investors who were in the know made billions by investing in the former public assets (including, inevitably, oil companies) Naturally, they paid no taxes

National Security Advisor Brzezinski boasted that Russia had passed into de facto Western receivership'

Gorbachev, the darling of the West, who had overseen this massive give away, didn't last long

And when President Putin was democratically elected and tried to stop the foreign investors from helping themselves to his country's wealth (and then sending it abroad as dividends, interest and capital) the Americans were furious

While the Warsaw bloc countries were weakened by what had happened, the United States (and their pet NATO) expanded. Officials reinforced their view that the US alone had the right to use nuclear weapons first and that the US alone had the right to use military force unilaterally. President Clinton's administration

directly took over T7H,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

announced that it no longer felt bound by the UN Charter prohibiting the threat or use of force. And the US announced that it had the sole right to use force to ensure 'uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies and strategic resources'

(Neither Clinton nor anyone else in the White House seemed interested in the fact that international law defines such behaviour as 'aggression' and 'the supreme international crime'. That, at least, was the view of the judges at Nuremberg.)

The result was a new Cold War with the US and its NATO allies ranged against China and Russia and any countries resisting the theft, by the US, of their land and resources. Everywhere NATO went it left behind huge numbers of bodies, destroyed towns and countries with no future. But every time NATO went somewhere, American billionaire bankers got much richer.

1991

The Trilateral Commission published a book entitled *Beyond Interdependence: The Meshing of the World's Economy and the Earth's Ecology* by a Canadian called J. M. MacNeill who was general secretary of the World Commission on Environment and Development (which was also known as the Brundtland Commission). The book warned that the world was coming to an end and that there was a desperate need for a world government.

MacNeill argued that it should be at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 that the Establishment should take on the responsibility for the future of mankind.

The foreword to the book was written by David Rockefeller who argued (with insider knowledge, of course) that 'environmental issues are mightily moving onto the central policy agenda and we all feel the need for a new synthesis' (Sadly, there was no translation of what he meant in the book.)

The introduction was written by Maurice Strong who had been executive secretary of the first eco-summit 'The 1972 Stockholm Conference on Human Environment' (If you are beginning to feel dizzy at the existence of so many organisations with the same general, grandiose purpose you are not alone.) Strong argued that decisions must be made that 'will literally determine the fate of the earth' and talked of an intermeshing of economic independence and ecological

independence and an intermeshing of the two (The one thing the ego warriors can do, other than hold up traffic and sprinkle coloured chalk dust in an untating manner, is to create an impenetrable and instantly forgettable phrase or sentence I feel bad about having to include so many of them in this book but if

dirs tele nm bouk TS4,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

we are to follow the bits of bread in the forest we need to learn to read the runes See what I mean?)

What MacNeill was talking about (in the code of the time) was international central planning, a more equitable distribution of wealth, the end of national sovereignty, global control of resources, global central planning and a reduction in the global population. If you are beginning to think that this all sounds just a touch like something Karl Marx might have written then you are probably not alone. In practice, there is little or no difference between modern environmentalism, communism and, of course, fascism. They are, in practical terms, identical and interchangeable.

MacNeill warned about overpopulation, global warming, deforestation, biodiversity, acid rain, rising sea levels and overpopulation and also talked about sustainable development and sustainable growth. There was talk of the Earth Summit involving representatives of most governments, hundreds of major industries and thousands of non-governmental organisations - all of course, with axes which needed sharpening — and he talked of the need for environmental taxes, probably to be administered by the United Nations (Though the UN staff would probably remain untaxed.)

MacNeill demanded an Earth Council or World Environment and Development Forum to govern earth and look after the ordinary people who can no longer be trusted to have a say in how the world is run.

As usual, the only thing missing from this feast of rhetoric was the presence of any facts. There were many warnings and much tub thumping but not a lot else.

Sadly, Mr MacNeill is no longer with us though according to the Community Research Connections (which is, so it proudly says, a Sustainable Community Development) he was recipient of many honours, was Chairman of the World Bank's Independent Inspection Panel and he was a member of far too many panels and institutes and boards for me to list here without your eyes glazing over. Mr MacNeill is one of a new breed of professional advisors who travel the world, sitting on committees and panels and being well-paid to spread anxiety and incomprehensible solutions.

Before and after this meeting, President Gorbachev of the USSR published proposals which bore an uncanny resemblance to the proposals which were published in Rio. It's no surprise that as far as the West was concerned, Gorbachev was the most popular President of the USSR for many decades.

dims tele ns pouk TQ,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

In The New York Times in December 1989, Gorbachev was reported to have spoken at the United Nations and said ‘International economy security is unacceptable unless related not only to the world’s agreement but also the elimination of the threat to the world’s environment Let us also think about setting up within the framework of the United Nations a center for emergency environmental assistance’

1992

In Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 1992, the United Nations held a massive and now infamous shindig called UNCED which was designed to make environmentalism the world’s most important topic It was here that the UN’s Earth Charter was born and it was here that the UN revealed {to a no doubt excited audience) its plan for the future called Agenda 21 — an 800-page detailed plan written to help the UN and its supporters take over the world and run everything in the name of ‘sustainable development’, with huge costs to be paid by unwitting and probably unwilling taxpayers everywhere

There was also a Global Warming Convention and a Biodiversity Convention The people at the UN (like ail Greens) love treaties and conventions and declarations And they love committees and meetings ~ especially if the meetings are held somewhere pleasant and the expenses are paid by someone else (preferably taxpayers)

The participants at UNCED were largely collaborators working for the conspirators The conspirators themselves (the financiers and bankers who were behind the climate change fraud) usually prefer to stay behind the scenes, just pulling strings as and when they feel it is appropriate or necessary

The plan was simple to form more international institutions of control, to get governments to sign treaties on global warming and to designate the national and international agencies ‘that will bear responsibility for the first phase of implementation, tentatively set for the last seven years of this century’ In other words the aim was to create instability and fear to unsettle the world’s citizens

It was generally agreed that the world wasn’t a pretty rotten state and that it was possibly either getting too hot or too cold and that whatever was happening was all the fault of people who needed to be punished This meeting in Rio was the culmination of the Iron Mountain shindig held a generation and a half earlier The Iron Mountain predictions were bang on the button, though that wasn’t much of a surprise

dirs tele nm bouk TQS,

THEIR ~2h PenG ela

With no hard evidence to support their position, the conspirators (and don’t forget they founded the United Nations) chose climate change (and environmental problems in general) as a way to terrify populations everywhere, to excuse aggressive plans and to mobilise a growing army of collaborators who could be convinced to demonstrate and form action groups

Since the financiers and conspirators controlled the mainstream media, it wasn't easy to manipulate the message being fed to viewers and readers everywhere around the world

Greedy megalomaniacs had now forced governments everywhere to adopt long-range policies that were based more on science fiction than anything resembling real science. Liberal intellectuals, teachers and lecturers absorbed what they were fed and became enthusiastic purveyors of misinformation to their students

The myth of climate change became integrated into school and college curricula. And the myth was accompanied by the convenient belief that the 'new' problem could only be solved by a combination of kindly, caring governments and determined and committed NGOs. A new industry was born with billions of dollars to spend on propaganda. Dozens of new foundations were founded, mostly led by key insiders and members of the establishment. The Sierra Club, the World Wilderness Congress, the Centre for Earth Resource Analysis, the Heritage Trust, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund and so on control billions of dollars and are all involved in spreading the same message

There were plenty of lies and imaginative graphs and pie charts to excuse the plans for the world. But there was never any evidence

Any teacher who tells children that global warming is real is guilty of a crime of unimaginable proportions and unimaginable consequences. This dangerous propaganda is nothing more than an unpleasant branch of science fiction and is destroying the lives of generations

It is, of course, impossible to prove that there isn't any evidence to support the myth of climate change (nee global warming). But nor is there any evidence to support the lies which are so freely shared. And the most convincing proof that they are lying comes in the fact that climate change promoters will not debate their claims

1993

trans LePint ook \$c

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

Every time there is famine, flood, wildfire or any sort of 'natural' problem, anywhere in the world, the climate change cultists blame the weather. More specifically and more significantly, they blame man-made climate change

But they are always lying

Let me illustrate how and why they are lying with this very short discussion

of what happened in Somalia in 1993, when the United Nations and the US Military launched 'Operation Restore Hope' to help a population officially devastated by drought, desertification and civil war

What was not widely reported was that Somalia's problems began in the

1980s Up until that time, Somalia had been pretty much self-sufficient in food. Then the IMF and the World Bank decided that Somalia needed help. And, as Ronald Reagan once said, the most dangerous and frightening words in the world are 'I'm from the government and I'm here to help'.

The banks decided that Somali agriculture needed reform and decided to help.

Before anyone knew what was happening, Somalia had huge, unpayable debts to Washington-based financial institutions - particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Somalia had been helped into destruction.

Here's what really happened.

First, Somalia was told that it needed a 'structural adjustment programme'. Within a short time, Somalia became dependent upon imported grain and in

order to pay the bills for the imported grain the country had to borrow money. The cheap imports with which Somalia was supplied by the kindly bankers

meant that local farmers couldn't make any money. Farming communities became impoverished.

At the same time the best agricultural land was appropriated by people with links to the Government. This land was used for producing fruits, oil seeds and

cotton which America wanted.

The Somali currency then collapsed and the price of imported materials

rose.

The World Bank decided that it could 'help' by insisting that farm animals

should be vaccinated,

Naturally, the vaccines and the vets cost a good deal of money. The World

Bank said that 'veterinarian services are essential for livestock development'.

The Somalis had managed quite well without vaccines for a very long time. (The vaccine ploy has been used widely for many years and is now universal in

developing countries, 31%,

THEIR DEFENDING PLAN

the US, the EU, the UK and elsewhere. Farmers who do not have their animals vaccinated are not allowed to sell them. Even pet owners are forced to have their animals regularly vaccinated and micro-chipped.)

Water supplies were then taken over and privatised.

The local farmers, nomadic herdsmen couldn't cope and were decimated. The

World Bank thought this was a good thing because nomadic farmers in sub-Saharan Africa were viewed as a cause of environmental degradation.

The Somalians could then not afford the vets or the vaccines and the result was that Somalian cattle exports plummeted Their beef was not vaccinated and therefore not acceptable Instead of buying Somahan beef, their customers bought from suppliers in Australian and the European Community

The Somalian Government was put under strict controls by the IMF and tight budget targets were set by IMF 'experts'

The banks then provided aid

Unfortunately, the help wasn't provided as money or equipment but as food

The Government couldn't give the food to the people but had to sell the food in order to raise money to pay the foreign banks

The outside banks then took control of the country

The economic changes meant that health and education programmes col-

lapsed School enrolment collapsed, school buildings deteriorated, school materials could not be bought and then schools simply closed And thanks to the intervention from the banks, wages collapsed by about 90% The World Bank then took over the civil service Public expenditure was tightened

By 1989, Somalia had to find 194 6% of Its export earnings to cover its debts The country was effectively owned by the US controlled banks

And when the people of Somalia started to starve to death because they weren't growing any food and couldn't afford to import any food, the US controlled IMF and World Bank very kindly stepped in with more aid and more loans and more debt

Actually, of course, the money for those loans comes from Wall Street Banks And it is the banks which hold the debts

Within less than a decade and a half the US controlled banks had effectively taken ownership of Somalia and all its resources

And naturally the owners of those banks, the conspirators who are pushing for a Great Reset and a World Government, blamed climate change

Exactly the same thing has happened all over the world

Sums total about 31%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

The American bankers use the power of the dollar and the world's agencies to exploit and steal They overthrow any leaders who dare to stand up to them They used armed force (provided by the American government) to install compliant dictators and then claim that the oligarchies they have created are evidence of westernised democracy They force foreign countries to keep their central bank savings in the form of loans to the US Treasury so that none of their 'investments' costs them a penny

American neoliberals working with and for the banks have mastered the art of turning public enterprises and honest, simple utilities into interest paying financial vehicles. And when they have created a large debt, they appropriate that country's land and resources and keep them for themselves. The American taxpayers underwrite the thievery but it is the American oligarchs who benefit. And this has been going on since the 1980s. Today, a tiny number of Americans (bankers, financiers and property dealers) now possess more wealth than the whole of the middle class.

The enthusiastic climate change nutters are merely aiding and abetting global genocide and the end of freedom and whatever remains of democracy.

If you don't believe that the US would do such things please do a little research of your own into precisely what happened in Somalia.

Or, indeed, in any other country which has been allegedly devastated by climate change.

And take a look, for example, at the way the IMF forced Thailand and South Korea to allow more foreign ownership of their economies and how, as a result, American companies ended up owning key sectors in those countries.

1994

In 1994, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change came into being with the aim of preventing 'dangerous' human interference with the climate system. (This is odd wording since there are currently numerous attempts being made to interfere with the climate. So, for example, one enormously dangerous, even insane, plan is the one which involves spraying substances into the air in order to stop the sun's rays hitting earth.)

Today, most reputable scientists accept that manmade climate change is a myth and that the whole climate change movement is based on fraudulent evidence. Back in 1994, there wasn't even any fake evidence available. The UN created its Convention on Climate Change on little more than a whim. 'The objec-

Sues tele nt wouk 32%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN"

tive was to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner'

Countries which were deemed to have contributed most to the alleged problem were expected to reduce their emissions to 1990 levels though there was never any scientific evidence that this was practical or even a good idea.

The UNFCCC is one of three conventions brought into being at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 (the other two were the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification) and the UN reports (in its usual pompous and meaningless way) that it was 'in this context that the Joint Liaison Group was set up to boost cooperation among the three Conventions, with the ultimate aim of developing synergies in their activities on issues of mutual concern'.

The United Nations does not like to trouble itself with boring science or with dull evidence, and especially doesn't like to trouble itself with scientific facts, it prefers to concentrate on creating 'conventions', having very expensive conferences and forming Liaison groups. The UN is all about laws and rhetoric and getting other people to do things.

2005

New Zealand, Chile, Brunei and Singapore created the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2005. The partnership was a mutual trade agreement.

In 2008, the United States decided to take over the TPP and the Obama administration sponsored lobbyists to transform the TPP into an agreement designed to block the public regulation of health, the environment, or other public interest problems that might interfere with corporate profits ~ namely American corporate profits. Once again, Obama protected the big international companies and the bankers and punished the people who had been foolish enough to vote for him.

Obama's bailouts made the crooks even richer and impoverished still further the poor and the middle classes. The destruction of the middle classes and the poor is a deliberate neoliberal policy, in the same way that the destruction of Third World economies is a deliberate policy.

The American version of the TPP gave power to a new court (an Investor State Dispute Settlement court) which could stop governments from suing companies and investors who had caused damage. Worse still, ISDS tribunals could order governments to pay fines to foreign companies which felt that public regula-

Sis tele nm bouk 32%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

toons had impaired their profits. The tribunals could order a government to pay a company any amount it liked, without limit. And so the new court made it possible for bankers and companies to do what they liked to a country without any penalty. And if a bank or company felt that a country's labour or safety regulations might damage its profits, it could sue the Government for loss of profits.

So, for example, when an Ecuadorian court ordered the oil firm Chevron to pay \$9.5 billion in damages for causing pollution, an ISDS tribunal in The Hague overruled the Ecuadorian Supreme Court. To make matters worse the ISDS fined Ecuador \$18 billion, plus interest, for cancelling a joint exploration venture with the oil giant Occidental.

Small countries are regularly ruined by these lawsuits which often involve small sums of money for the globalists but huge sums of money for the countries involved.

The US Chief Justice, John Roberts has said that ISDS has the power to review any nation's laws and annul the actions of that country's legislature, executive and judiciary.

The ISDS tribunals (which make the judgements) consist of three private sec

tor lawyers who may also be the lawyers acting for the companies which have brought the legal action So the three lawyers bring a lawsuit and then decide who wins And then they decide how much money the country should pay, in dollars, for daring to violate American corporate rights

It is, by any definition, nothing more than a racket and just as bad, if not worse, than anything conceived by the Cosa Nostra

Bankers and companies can even sue for what they claim are potential future profits

All this sounds like something out of a bizarre piece of fiction But it isn't It's

all true

Oh, and one other thing all this pro-American legislation (much of it dealt

with in secret) means that consumers have absolutely no way of knowing whether the food which they eat has been genetically modified, grown with hormones, treated with chemicals or anything else

The conspirators behind all this can do what they damned well like And no one can stop them

And it is worth remembering that these laws were introduced by the Obama Administration which was ruthlessly pro corporate And nothing has changed In 2021, President-elect Joe Biden wrote in Foreign Affairs magazine that his

Sums to not book 33%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

mecoming 'foreign policy agenda will place the United States at the head of the table"

Thanks to the neoliberals all international law is now drawn up by corporate lobbyists employed by the conspirators working towards the Great Reset

2007

The American housing bubble and subsequent financial collapse, didn't happen by accident, Banks deliberately pushed house prices to unsustainable levels and, in order to find a constant stream of 'greater fools' to keep buying overpriced properties, the banks offered 100% loans with no down payment Hundreds of thousands of dollars were loaned to what were called NINJA buyers —they had no income, no job and no assets Mortgages were given to unemployed black and Hispanic minority borrowers who had no way of paying back the interest When the inevitable happened, President Obama (a long established 'insider') refused to prosecute the banks who falsified income statements and provided false property appraisals Instead Obama bailed out the big banks with taxpayers' money - thereby making the bankers at the big institutions a great deal richer The bankers used the huge loans they were given not to help their customers but to pay themselves huge and utterly unjustifiable bonuses The losers were the millions of families and individuals who had trusted the banks Many of them went

bankrupt as their homes were taken from them Homeownership fell as private equity companies set up by financiers bought foreclosed properties at distressed prices and then rented them out at huge profits None of this could have happened without Obama, who was rewarding his Wall Street campaign contributors The home owners were not allowed to have their mortgages written down to the 'distressed sale' prices Only the banks benefited from the bailouts The black and Hispanics who lost everything had been the major supporters of Obama in the Presidential elections The 2007-8 housing collapse was a class war with racial and ethnic overtones And Obama, the man millions had trusted, had shown himself to be on the side of the rich, white, mostly Jewish bankers In his autobiography A Promised Land (for which he received a huge advance payment) Obama said he worried that 'stretching the definition of criminal statutes to prosecute banking executives' would have 'required a violence to the social order' Michael Hudson, the author of *Destiny of Civilization* points out that 'The refusal of President Obama and his Department of Justice to prosecute show the degree to which the distinction between rent-seeking and outright fraud and

Sis tele nm bouk \$44,

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

financial crime has been thoroughly erased by Wall Street's regulatory capture not only of the Federal Reserve and Treasury but of the Executive Branch of government itself'

It is worth pointing out that there appears to be a revolving door between the big banks and the American Government with numerous individuals frequently moving to and fro without there apparently being any thought that this might be in some way compromising Actually, of course, similar revolving doors connect the big American banks, particularly Goldman Sachs, and other Governments The British Government has for some years appeared to be an outpost of Goldman Sachs

The resulting depression which Obama created meant that the economy shrank and public sector budgets collapsed Government at local, state and federal levels had to cut back social spending and cut pension commitment In order to cut costs and raise money, government at all three levels sold public land and natural resources as well as basic infrastructure in order to pay back money owed to the banks Interest rates fell to zero or thereabout for anyone who had savings but banks and credit card companies charged high interest rates with the average credit card owner paying 29% interest Workers were squeezed by the rising cost of their debts And after the junk mortgage crash, the Federal Reserve created trillions of dollars (out of nothing) to bail out the banks that had bad loans The banks didn't use the money to help their customers but they used the money to give themselves huge bonuses to celebrate their failure

The financial troubles that had started in America (thanks entirely to President Obama and the neoliberals) quickly spread around the world and in order to 'help' struggling countries, the IMF introduced austerity programmes In countries everywhere, governments were given 'loans' and local taxpayers had to pay them back Wages, living standards and currency values all fell The American banks used the power of the dollar to ensure that they continued to make huge amounts of money

2011

In 2011, the US, Britain and France launched a NATO attack on Libya. They captured, tortured and killed Colonel Gaddafi and then destroyed Libya. The country's gold reserves were stolen and the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, gave Libya's arms to ISIS fighters so that they could attack Syria and Iraq.

ISIS stole \$44 billion,

THEIR EFFYING PLAN

The aim was to prevent those countries from using their own oil to develop and grow stronger.

NATO attacked Libya because Colonel Gaddafi wanted to seek independence from America's control of Libya. He wanted to use his country's oil to develop a proper educational system and a national social-welfare system. More dangerously for the US he wanted to create a gold backed African currency, throw out American military bases and obtain loans for construction from China instead of the World Bank. Libya had the highest standard of living in Africa and Gaddafi was sharing the revenue from oil sales with the country's citizens.

All that was more than enough to enrage the globalists who could see their power and influence waning and their control of the oil, and the money, disappearing.

And so Gaddafi was demonised and killed and his country 'captured', sacked and left in ruins. Today, thanks to America in general and Hillary Clinton in particular, Libya is a wild country where slaves are sold in open air markets.

2017

President Trump insisted in 2017, and then again in 2018, that the US had a right to take oil from Iraq and from Syria. The reason, he said, was that the oil would be payment for the cost of America having attacked those countries. In 2020, Trump repeated that America had the right to take the natural resources of any country that it attacked, as compensation for the cost of the attack — with absolutely no reparations.

America also attacked Venezuela, attempting (and failing) to depose President Maduro, and then persuading its NATO allies to impose sanctions on the country to disrupt the country's economy. When Venezuela wanted to use its gold to pay for food and medicine which the people needed, Britain (which was holding the country's reserves at the Bank of England and which had consistently sided with America in imposing sanctions on Venezuela) simply seized the gold and held it until the American government decided who to make President of the country. In a quite extraordinary judgement, a British high court judge said that it would be illegal to give Venezuela's gold to the elected President Maduro because the British Government didn't recognise him and wanted to make his political rival the President.

John is Lett in 35%,

THEIR "EFFYING PLAN

Much the same thing has happened almost everywhere in the world where there are supplies of oil, gas or valuable minerals. And it is these offensive actions, conducted by neoliberals fighting against democracy and freedom, which explain why America has been continuously at war since the 1940s and has attacked, interfered with or invaded over 200 countries since the end of the

Second World War. Neoliberals see democratic laws as intruding on their liberty, and neoliberals do not believe in holding corporations liable for the damage that they cause. The trigger, of course, has often been oil and gas.

Today, oil and gas still remain vital for almost all human activities and America likes to keep control of the supply. And so, America put sanctions on European companies which were helping to build Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. Germany offered to build port facilities to import US Liquefied natural gas (at higher prices) but America still wasn't satisfied. The US was determined to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and, therefore, to ensure that Europe had to buy American gas.

The war between Russia and Ukraine provided the US with a convenient opportunity to blow up the pipeline so that American oil and gas companies would once again control the supply of gas to Europe. The mainstream media claim that Russia blew up its own pipeline (when if it had wanted to stop the flow of gas all it had to do was turn off the tap) but it is generally understood outside the mainstream media that the Americans blew up the pipeline in order to preserve their own massively profitable sale of gas to European countries — even though this meant that European consumers had to pay vastly inflated prices for the heating, their fuel and, ultimately, their food. The high costs of fuel in Europe in 2022 and onwards were a direct result of American, not Russian, actions.

In the UK, the Government has punished its own electors by unilaterally imposing special taxes and conditions on oil and gas companies working the North Sea. This was allegedly done to help Britain reach net zero as quickly as possible.

The evidence shows conclusively that neoliberals run the world, which is now controlled by a new breed of individuals who have managed to meld communism and fascism with self-interest.

2018

It was in 2018 that a young Swedish girl called Greta Thunberg first began to attract publicity for her views on global warming. It seemed to me then (and seems even more so now) that she had simply been selected as a promotional tool by

Dini. Hele nm bouk 35%,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

the conspirators. It is difficult for truth-tellers to attack a young girl (particularly one with a form of autism) who seems to believe in her message. And it is obviously difficult for critics to argue with a girl, however rude she might be, when she appears to have some sort of mental illness. For the conspirators, Greta also had the advantage of being quite small and unlikely to grow too tall too quickly. The one certainty in my mind is that Greta's rise to international fame didn't happen by accident or without a great deal of planning. Sadly, Greta Thunberg's

claims have caused much needless anxiety and despair among children around the world

A short book entitled Greta's Homework by Zina Cohen analyses and destroys the nonsense of climate change

2020

The idea of the 15 minute city (or, as it is also called, the 20 minute city) first really came to global prominence in 2020 when the socialist mayor of Paris announced a plan to introduce the concept to the French capital

The idea of the 15 minute city is that all daily necessities such as accommodation, food, shops, work, education, health care and leisure can be found within an area where everyone can get everywhere (on foot or by bicycle) within 15 minutes

Within months, cities and towns all over the world were announcing that they would become 15 minute cities and that motorised traffic would be strictly controlled or even banned. Residents in 15 minute cities were told that they would only be allowed out of their area on a limited number of days a year Road blocks, either manned or equipped with barriers would ensure that citizens obeyed the laws, and a plethora of CCTV cameras would help maintain discipline and ensure obedience

It was claimed that the 15 (or 20) minute cities would help cut down travel and would, therefore, help deal with the imaginary threat of climate change

According to a report from 'ARUP C40 Cities and University of Leeds' entitled The Future of Urban Consumption, the 'ambitious' target for the year 2030 is for individuals to eat no meat and no dairy produce and to have no household food waste And the 'ambitious' target for the year 2030 is for each individual to purchase only three new clothing items per year I wonder how many people realise that these targets have been proposed and what the consequences will be for industry (both manufacturing and retail) What about growing children and

Dani Heilmann book 36%,

THEIR "ERR FLYING PLAN

shimmers? Do they have to wait a year for a new pair of trousers? [if you buy a shirt, a dress and a sock do you have to wait until the following year to buy the other sock?

Oh, and the plan is that there will be no private vehicles whatsoever and individuals will be allowed one short haul return flight (less than 1500 km) every three

years Laptops and similar electronic devices will be expected to last seven years Good luck with that

None of this proposal was decided democratically None of this was put to the vote I'd like to think that no one takes this stuff seriously but I know they do This is the future that is planned for us

2020-2023

Early in 2020, governments around the world claimed that humans everywhere were threatened by a new version of the plague I dealt with this fake threat in a book called *Coming Apocalypse* which was published in April 2020- just weeks after the fake scare had begun (I dealt with the fake pandemic and its consequences in a series of books which are listed in the bibliography at the back of this book)

During 2020, 2021 and 2022 and 2023, I repeatedly challenged the proponents of the covid-19 vaccine to debate the vaccine's qualities in public I had published evidence warning that the so-called vaccine could cause heart attacks, blood clots, myocarditis and immune system problems in the autumn of 2020 — before the vaccine roll out began. I explained that I would prove that the vaccine did not do what it was said to do, that it was incredibly dangerous and would be responsible for more deaths than would be saved

Absurd figures were released suggesting that the covid-19 vaccine had saved millions of lives but no one ever attempted to provide any evidence to support this wild conjecture [I have been writing and broadcasting about vaccines probably longer than anyone alive but no one would debate with me | I am not surprised Whenever it is considered inconvenient, which is most of the time, the truth must be suppressed and the truth-tellers must be oppressed and silenced

Although they have never been shown to be safe nor effective, and what evidence is available shows that they do far more harm than good (my book *Any one who tells you vaccines are safe and effective is lying here's the proof* contains shocking statistical evidence about heavily promoted vaccines such as those for

Dini Hele nm book S74,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

polio and smallpox) vaccination programmes are promoted heavily for a number of reasons they can be used to force compliance, they make huge amounts of money for the pharmaceutical industry, they can be used to cull populations, they can be used to induce infertility in future generations and they enable governments to 'prove' that they are caring people, deeply concerned for the welfare of the public

It is no exaggeration to say that, throughout the world, vaccination programmes have been weaponised' Vaccines are not treatments, they are methods of control and destruction

(As an aside, it is worth mentioning that vaccines, like other drugs, are often promoted on the basis of experiments performed on animals However, such experiments are entirely worthless and are used because, not in spite of, the fact that they are misleading There are two reasons why animal experiments should be abandoned First, such experiments are notoriously unreliable and give misleading results more than they provide useful results If you don't know which experiments are misleading then all experiments are worthless Second, the drugs industry itself will dismiss unfavourable results on the basis that animals are so different to humans that tests done on animals are utterly unreliable My

book Betrayal of Trust contains the names and details of fifty pharmaceutical products which are known to cause serious problems when given to animals but which were approved for human use on the grounds that animal experiments are worthless And yet new products, such as vaccines, are given approval at least partly on the basis that animal experiments were conducted)

When the BBC in the UK founded a special unit called Verify to act as a sort of fact checking unit, I challenged the entire Verify Team to a live television debate about covid-19 and the covid-19 'vaccine'

Naturally, I heard nothing

Exactly the same thing that had happened in 2007-8, happened again in 2020-2022 during the fake covid pandemic

The pattern has now become quite simple and straightforward. It is the same basic policy that the Americans used to destroy Russia (and help themselves to all the money) after the debacle of 1991

As local economies are forced to collapse and fall into recession, politicians and bankers move in. Aided and abetted by the IMF and the World Bank, they offer loans at usurious interest rates and take over planning rules, land ownership and valuable resources

Dini tert ni buku S74,

THEIR ~ERF FLYING PLAN

The result of the 2020-2023 fake pandemic was that the American banks and financiers got much richer and the rest of the world (especially hard-working, decent people) got much poorer

And, of course, the take-over of the world by the unscrupulous and greedy banking elite has spread into all areas of life

So, for example, small farms and small businesses everywhere are being shut down permanently as government aid and support goes to the huge, often crooked international corporations who have hundreds of lobbyists and can afford to pay bribes to keep politicians happy (When I say 'bribes' what I really mean, of course, is that large companies and bankers pay out huge sums in campaign contributions And when politicians retire they variably receive huge book advance payments that everyone knows will never be paid back out of royalties Oh, and politicians are regularly paid vastly inflated fees for speaking engagements)

During the fake covid pandemic of 2020 (I have used government figures to prove that the official claims were fake and these are available on my websites and in my videos) politicians in just about every country seemed to make the same 'mistakes' at almost exactly the same time - introducing lockdowns, mask wearing, social distancing and vaccination programmes which all did infinitely more harm than good Politicians now claim that they were merely acting on 'best advice' and that if they made mistakes then the mistakes were made in good faith But none of those things were mistakes Despite the appearances

nothing happened as a result of incompetence, everything happened by design. If politicians were merely incompetent it would be reasonable to assume that occasionally they would get things right but they never do. Seemingly inexplicable and indefensible domestic and foreign policies in countries around the world were a result of careful planning, overseen by conspirators and put into action by enthusiastic, well-rewarded collaborators. It is absolutely no coincidence that every new government makes the same mistakes as its predecessors. And it is no accident that every new national and local government asks the people what they want and then ignores the answers.

2023

In 2023, the World Health Organisation made it clear that they plan to force everyone on earth to accept a barrage of vaccinations —to be jabbed with a whole

Dinimes tele ni pouk 324,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

sequence of jabs which don't do what they are supposed to do but which do harm people, make them infertile and create new illnesses.

The World Health Organisation's refreshed plan for global dominance via the needle was slipped out quietly while the mainstream media remains obsessed with the trivial activities of a bunch of Z-list celebrities and minor royals and, oc-

asionally, with the latest in a series of designer wars created by American conspirators and their friends in NATO.

There are people around who still don't realise this but the World Health Organisation is the terrorist wing of the United Nations, and for the last three years it has spread lies and fear with relentless enthusiasm. The WHO's job is to terrify the public and adapt the truth to suit the needs of the conspirators pushing for global power and a world government.

The WHO is an essential weapon in the UN's armoury. It has nothing whatsoever to do with health but is a plain and simple terrorist group and a vital part of the global conspiracy which is taking us remorselessly into the New World Order and dragging us down into the Great Reset.

The WHO is planning to launch a dangerous and unnecessary programme of compulsory vaccinations —all untested and dangerous. Disingenuous as always, they and their jack-booted collaborators will say, of course, that the vaccinations aren't compulsory and that if you don't want to buy food or electricity, have a bank account, keep a job or leave your home, you won't need a vaccination certificate. Of course if you do want to buy food and electricity, have a job, leave your home and generally stay alive then you'll need all your jabs but as the loathsome Trudeau would probably say they won't be compulsory.

They think we're all stupid and the tragedy is that they're nearly right. Most people are stupid and most people will accept everything they're told by the WHO — an organisation now infamous for its links with the vaccine hobbyist Bill Gates —a man with close links with the cuddly duo of the BBC, The Guardian and

Jeffrey Epstein

In March 2020, over three years ago, I warned that they would introduce compulsory vaccinations. If you listen carefully you can still hear the sniggers and the abuse I received at the time. Totalitarian regimes have always introduced compulsory vaccination programmes - though they've never before been planned globally and they've always failed. I also warned about digital money and the rest of the plan.

Dini tert ni bouk 33%,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

Today, there is no need for any additional evidence proving that vaccines don't do what they are supposed to do and aren't safe. My book *Anyone who tells you vaccines are safe and effective is lying* is packed with information proving that vaccine programmes aren't safe or effective. And in the autumn of 2020, I recorded a series of free videos detailing exactly what problems the covid-19 jab would cause. I warned about the heart problems, the clots and the myocarditis months before those problems appeared and before the jabs roll out programme. Meanwhile, of course, mainstream media propaganda outfits were telling everyone that the vaccine was safe and effective.

The official figures prove that my warnings - the best part of three years ago — were absolutely accurate. The Government figures also show that there never was a pandemic and the remarketed over-promoted flu was just a pretty standard flu. The so-called vaccine, however, is one of the most toxic pharmaceutical products in history - making thalidomide look good. The sensible folk who said NO to the toxic jab are today the healthiest people left on earth.

There is now no doubt the covid jab is a killer, fake vaccine — useless but far more dangerous than depleted uranium shells or cluster bombs. Like bombs, rockets and bullets its only conceivable purpose is to kill people.

The evidence showing that the over-promoted, over-sold covid-19 jab is the most dangerous pharmaceutical product ever used is denied only by fools or shills for the conspirators and the drug industry. I have repeatedly warned that the covid jab can and does cause or exacerbate a huge range of serious health problems — including heart disease, clotting problems and cancer. And as I warned two and a half years ago the immune system problems caused by the 'vaccine' are deadly.

The evidence suggesting that the covid vaccine is toxic is overwhelming and should be banned. Any other product known to cause such severe problems would have been taken off the market a long time ago.

A review of 325 autopsies on patients who died after covid vaccination showed that 74% of the deaths were caused by the covid vaccine. The nine eminent authors of the relevant medical paper found that the organ systems most likely to be involved in covid jab deaths were cardiovascular system, haematological system and respiratory system. The mean time between vaccination to death was 14.3 days. A total of 240 deaths out of the 325 deaths were independent.

dently adjudicated as directly due to or significantly contributed to by covid 19 vaccinations '

“om bel ot bouk 39%,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

The nine authors concluded ‘The consistency seen among cases in this review with known covid 19 vaccine adverse effects, their mechanisms and related excess deaths, coupled with autopsy confirmation and physician-led death adjudication, suggests there is a high likelihood of causal link between covid-19 vaccines and death in most cases Further urgent investigation is required for the purpose of clarifying our findings'

Then there was the paper which appeared in the British Journal of General Practice recently which showed that 'enlargement of axillary, supraclavicular or cervical lymph nodes following vaccination with covid-19 mRNA vaccines is more frequent than initially reported, with a rate reaching up to 16% following the second dose of the Moderna mRNA vaccine' The paper also reported that a few cases of lymphoma were reported in the literature

The authors warned that doctors in charge of patients with post vaccination lymphadenopathy should be reminded to consider the possibility of an underlying or coincidental malignant disorder

The truth, of course, is that there aren't enough doctors around to check fully

16% of all the patients who have a second dose of that vaccine
The covid jab is causing one problem after another And the problems are ig-

nored or suppressed by the medical establishment

The covid-19 jab is responsible for a surge in type 1 diabetes among children

and teenagers A survey of 38,000 young people (reported in the Journal of the American Medical Association) showed that the rise is substantial Over two years ago, I warned that this would happen I warned that the covid 19 jab would push up blood sugar levels. The epidemic of type 1 diabetes is caused by the covid 19 vaccine And the drug companies will now get even richer selling treatments for diseases the drug companies caused

Everywhere you look there is evidence proving that the covid jab was a hiler
In less than two and a half years nearly 2,000 healthy athletes have had heart attacks or sudden serious health problems — with over 1,300 of them dying

And yet the medical establishment, bought with drug company money, still refuses even to contemplate the idea that the deaths may be caused by their beloved vaccine They dare not admit that the medical profession is responsible for thousands of unnecessary deaths because they're terrified of the inevitable lawsuits not to mention the professional embarrassment

Doctors who gave the covid jab without properly assessing the dangers are going to be on the wrong end of the world's most expensive class action lawsuit

“om bel ot bouk oG*,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

But the vaccines have not been withdrawn No one in the drug companies or the medical establishment is issuing grovelling apologies

Instead, as has happened for over three years now, the doctors who are expasing the dangers of the covid-19 jab are being harassed, banned and censored

Any doctor who still prves the covid jab 1s a dangerous fool who should be struck off the medical register for life and arrested immediately for attempted murder

“pon elon book 3G,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

Scteenenot saved
lapio vk your sores 13hot

Summary SFIS RE EDI CELE!

Look back and 1t 1s clear that America has now been at war with the rest of the world for around 100 years The designer or proxy war against Russia, taking place in Ukraime, followed, almost seamlessly, after the disastrous and damaging war in Afghamistan which was a disaster to start with, a disaster throughout and a disaster at the end Huge numbers of Afghans and Amencans died for absolutely no reason and billions of dollars were wasted As usual, no one has ever been sacked or held accountable

It seems that for the Americans, or rather their political leaders, peace is now just a memory, not even available as an interlude between wars which have become a never-ending opportunity to spend more money on bombs, rockets and depleted uranium shells

Since the end of World War II, Amenca has created seerrmmngly endless wars artificially based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion or a drive for ‘democracy’, but really about acquiring money, power and control of resources America has become a pirate nation (In the 1990s I wrote two books about Amencan adventures One was called Rogue Natron and the other was called Global! Buily) None of those wars was fought to defend American hves or property, all were fought to give the conspirators greater power and more money All of those wars ended up costing Americans many hives and a great deal of money, all involved the transfer of money from citizens everywhere to the bank accounts and trust funds of the conspirators

NATO and the CIA have been destabilising countnies all over the world for more than half a century ~ paying for terronst help whenever it has seemed useful and appropriate They have, for example, destabilised much of Europe, with the result that atlases and history books are out of date almost before they are printed. One minute one jeader in one country will be in favour and then,

suddenly favours will move to another leader in another country Groups of dissidents are encouraged, financed and armed if they promise to build a better financial relationship with America

It was always inevitable that we would head straight for World War III, immediately after Russia was forced to invade Ukraine, previously described as one of the most corrupt countries on earth Ukraine, remember, has persecuted Chinese with a relentlessness that would have aroused screams of outrage a few years ago and has an army whose soldiers delight in wearing Nazi insignia.

“aon belt at bouk \$14,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

America needs to attack and suppress both China and Russia The conspirators have chosen to target Russia first but there is no doubt the militant conspirators in the United States plan to start a war with China

We are being manipulated and controlled by a cabal of well-known politicians and billionaires and taken into a totalitarian society, with fear being the main driving force The significance of fear in our lives can never be underestimated

While writing this short book I was sitting in a cafe reading a volume of work by Petrarch and found these lines from Virgil in a piece by him entitled The Ascent of Mount Ventoux

‘Blessed the man who is skilled to understand
The hidden cause of things, who beneath his feet
All fear casts, and death’s relentless doom,
And the howlmeigs of greedy Acheron
If the real history of the 20th century and beyond is ever written (something

which I am beginning to doubt) then Obama and the Clintons and their fellow neoliberals will be remembered as the world’s most evil terrorists

It is surprising, is it not, how many Presidents and Prime Ministers (such as Blair et al) began their terms of office with very little money in the bank, spent their years in office earning quite modest salaries (supported in the case of Biden with money paid into his account from Ukraine and China) and then, shortly after the conclusion of their term of office, become immensely rich

The money paid to these former Presidents and Prime Ministers is usually handed over as massive advances for autobiographies that virtually no one will ever want to read or as extraordinarily high speaking fees for making speeches that virtually no one will ever want to listen to The two Clintons were, between them, paid millions of dollars for their memoirs When they were being investigated over corruption charges neither of them could remember anything

The fees paid out to the conspirators and the collaborators are, of course, payments for services rendered while the individual was in office And the main service rendered has been the creation of fear and the steady progress towards the Great Reset, the New World Order and a world government

“aon leten buak 01%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

Part Four: Here's what you can do

The conspirators are taking us into the Great Reset through their control of the mainstream media and much of the internet - and they have an army of collaborators, bots and secret service operatives working on their behalf. In the UK, a special brigade of the British Army is employed in spreading misinformation and suppressing the truth. And GCHQ, the UK's spy agency, has been busy suppressing honest, science based comments on the internet if, for example, the authors of those comments ask questions about the covid-19 'vaccine'. Even qualified doctors with solid evidence to share have been suppressed and censored. I wonder how many of those soldiers and spies realise that they are working against their own country and their own countrymen and women - the very people who are paying their wages. In America both the CIA and the FBI have interfered with the freedom of truth-tellers to share vital information.

But there are more of us than there are of them and if we are to win then we have to do it by spreading the truth.

Please buy and give away copies of this book or lend your copy to others to read. Please don't worry that I'm doing this to get rich. Since early 2020 my reputation and income have been utterly destroyed and we have put most of our time into sharing the truth. The price of this book has been kept as low as we are allowed to make it. If we make any money from the sale of this book (which is unlikely) we will use it to buy more copies and spread them around.

The problem, of course, is that most people don't want to know the truth. They have been thoroughly brainwashed and they would rather just watch the TV soaps, play with their recycling boxes and find new apps to download onto their smart phones. But we need to persuade more people to open their eyes and to educate themselves in the interests of self-preservation. We need to have at least 5% of the population on our side. If we are to survive, and everyone in that 5% needs to refuse to accept a digital currency or a digital passport and needs to refuse to carry a smart phone full of officially approved apps.

So, here's what you can do:

Buy copies of this book and give them to everyone you know | have kept the

royalty level as low as possible and I promise that, if I do earn anything from this book, every penny earned will be spent on buying and distributing copies to journalists, influencers, etc (I have to buy copies from Amazon just like you do.)

“yom bel ot buak 22%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

Appendix 1: A short bibliography

I read hundreds of books, thousands of articles and watched a great many videos

in the research, preparation and writing of this book Below I have listed a few of the books I found most useful

1984 by George Orwell
A Bigger Problem than Climate Change by Vernon Coleman
Acry from the Far Middle by PJ O'Rourke
Agenda 21 by Ron Taylor
Animal Farm by George Orwell
BBC Brainwashing Britain by David Sedgwick
Behind the Green Mask UN Agenda 21 by Rosa Koire
Black water The use of the world's most powerful mercenary army by Jeremy Scahill
Blackwater the use of the world's most powerful mercenary army by Jeremy Scahill
Blind Eye to Murder by Tom Bower
Bloodless Revolution by Vernon Coleman
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley
Chmategate, The Maryyuna Conspiracy, Project Blue Beam by the Dot Connector Library
Coming Apocalypse by Vernon Coleman
Covid-19 Exposing the Lies by Vernon Coleman
Covid 19 The Fraud Continues by Vernon Coleman
Covid 19 The Greatest Hoax in History by Vernon Coleman
Dangerous Ideas by Eric Berkowitz
Destiny of Civilization Finance Capitalism, Industrial Capitalism or Socialism by Michael Hudson
Dirty Wars The world's battlefield by Jeremy Scahill
Dirty Wars The world's battlefield by Jeremy Scahill
Dynastic America and those who own it by Henry H Klein
Endgame by Vernon Coleman
Essays on Free Knowledge The Origins of Wikipedia and the New Politics of Knowledge by Larry Sanger
Everything is Going to Get Worse by Vernon Coleman

“yom bel ot buak 93%,”

THELR ~ ERR FLYING PLAN

Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World by Sir Edward Creasy
Fog Facts by Larry Beinhart
Greta's Homework by Zina Cohen
Hidden Dangers How governments, telecom and electric power utilities suppress the truth about the known hazards of electro-magnetic field (EMF) radiation by Captain Jerry G Flynn
Hidden Persuaders by Vance Packard
Illuminati Agenda 21 by Dean and Jill Henderson
Living in a Fascist Country by Vernon Coleman
Love among the Ruins by Evelyn Waugh
Nobody Knows Anything by Robert Monarty
None Dare Call it Conspiracy by Gary Allen with Larry Abraham
Notes on Nationalism by George Orwell
OFPIS by Vernon Coleman

Orwell on Truth by George Orwell
 Parhamment of Whores by P.J.C'Rourke
 Politics and the Enghsh Language by George Orwell
 Powershift by Alvin Toffler
 Presstitutes Embedded in the Pay of the CIA by Udo Ulfkotte
 Say NO to the New World Order by Gary Allen
 Scrence, Liberty and Peace by Aldous Huxley
 Scrap the BBC by Richard D.North
 Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution A Guide to Building a
 Better World by Klaus Schwab
 Social Media Nightmare on Your Street by Vernon Coleman
 Sold Out by James Richards
 Stuffed! By Vernon Coleman
 Technocracy The Hard Road to World Order by Patnck M Wood
 The Art of War by Sun Tzu
 The Collapse of Antiquity by Michael Hudson
 The Creature from Jekyll Island A Second Look at the Federal Reserve by G Ed-
 ward Gniffin
 The Dark Side of Camelot -Seymour Hersh
 The Death of Money by James Rickards
 The Fourth and Richest Reich by Edwin Hartnch
 The Globalisation of Poverty and the New World Order by Michel Chossudovsky

urtlele im ougk 53%,

THEIR ~ ERR FYING PLAN

The Greening by Larry Abraham
 The Greening of America by Charles A.Reick
 The Hidden Enemy The German Threatzt to Post-War Peace by Heinz Pol
 The Lessons of History by Will and Anel Durant
 The Limits of State Action by Wilhelm von Humboldt
 The Man Versus the State by Herbert Spencer
 The New Germany and the Old Nazis byT H Tetens
 The Octopus Europetn the grip of organised crime by Brian Freemantie
 The Press by A J Liebling
 The Revolt of the Masses by Jose Ortega y Gasset
 The Rockefeller File by Gary Allen
 The Shocking History of the EU by Zima Cohen
 The Social Contract by Rousseau
 The Social Credit System in China by Anonymous
 The Tainted Source The Undemocratic Origins of the European Idea by John
 Laughland
 The Tycoons How Andrew Carnegie, John D Rockefeller, Jay Gould and J P Mor-
 gan invented the Amencan supereconomy by Chartes R Morris
 They want your money and your life by Vernon Coleman
 Tower of Basel The Shadowy History of the Secret Bank that Runs the World by
 Adam Lebor
 Trading with the Enemy by Charles Higham
 Tragedy & Hope by Carroll Quigley
 Unmasked Inside Antifa's Radical Plan to Destroy Democracy by Andy Ngo
 US-Imposed Post 9/11Mushm Holocaust and Muslim Genocide by Gideon Max-
 well Polya

“any lele ot boak 24%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

Appendix 2: Author biography

Sunday Times bestselling author Vernon Coleman qualified as a doctor in 1970 and has worked both in hospitals and as a principal in general practice. Vernon Coleman is a multi-million selling author and since 1975, he has written over 100 books which have sold over three million copies in the UK, been 1n best-seller lists around the world and been translated into 26 languages. Several of his books have been on the bestseller lists and in the UK paperback editions of his books have been published by Pan, Penguin, Corgi, Arrow, Century, RKP, Mandarin and Star among many others. His books have been adapted for television, radio and the cinema and serialised in newspapers around the world and his novel ‘Mrs Caldicot’s Cabbage War’ was turned into a successful, award winning movie. He has appeared on Top Gear (the motoring programme), written for a DIY magazine and contributed to a cookery video. He has presented numerous programmes on television and radio, including several series based on his best-selling book Bodypower which was voted one of the 100 most popular books by British readers.

Vernon Coleman has written columns for the Daily Star, Sun, Sunday Express, Planet on Sunday and The People (resigning from the latter when the editor refused to publish a column questioning the morality and legality of invading Iraq) and many other publications and has contributed over 5,000 articles, columns and reviews to 100 leading British publications including Daily Telegraph, Sunday Telegraph, Guardian, Observer, Sunday Times, Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, Daily Express, Woman, Woman's Own, Punch and Spectator. His columns and articles have also appeared in hundreds of leading magazines and newspapers throughout the rest of the world. He edited the British Clinical Journal and the European Medical Journal and for twenty years he wrote a column which was syndicated to over 40 leading regional newspapers in the UK and to papers all around the world. Local health officials were often so irritated by the column that they paid doctors to write competing columns without charge. Fortunately, with a few exceptions, this made little difference to the success of the column.

In the UK, Vernon Coleman was the TV AM doctor on breakfast TV and when he commented that fatty food had killed more people than Hitler, he wasn't fired until several weeks after a large food lobbyist had threatened to pull all its advertising. He was the first networked television Agony Aunt, working on the BBC.

“aon belt at bugk 24%,

THEIR “EPR FYING PLAN

Many millions consulted his Telephone Doctor advice lines and for six years he wrote a monthly newsletter which had subscribers in 17 countries.

In recent years Vernon has been banned from all mainstream media because his views are often at variance with those of the medical establishment. Since March 2020, the ban has been extended to include most of the internet and he is currently banned from using or even accessing YouTube because the videos he made

contained uncomfortable truths He made over 300 videos which have all been censored or banned He was refused admittance to Facebook, being told that he would be 'a threat to the Facebook community', expelled from LinkedIn (with no reason given) and banned from all social media For over 30 years he has had a website (www.vernoncoleman.com) and right from the start the site has been visited regularly by representatives of the CIA, the FBI and by members of armed forces around the world

Vernon Coleman has a medical degree, and an honorary science doctorate He has worked for the Open University in the UK and was an honorary Professor of Holistic Medical Sciences at the Open International University based in Sri Lanka. He worked as a general practitioner for ten years (resigning from the NHS after being fined for refusing to divulge confidential information about his patients to State bureaucrats) and has organised numerous campaigns both for people and for animals He can ride a bicycle and swim, though not at the same time He likes animals, cricket (before they started painting slogans on the grass), cycling, cafes and collecting cigarette cards Vernon Coleman is a bibliophile and has a library larger than most towns He used to enjoy cricket when it was played as a sport by gentlemen and loves log fires and making bonfires

Since 1999 he has been very happily married to the professional artist and author, Donna Antoinette Coleman to whom he is devoted and with whom he has co-written five books They live in the delightful if isolated village of Bulbury in Devon where they have designed for themselves a unique world to sustain and nourish them in these dark and difficult times They rarely leave home

oO

uw

“aorvielta Sugk

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

Appendix 3: What the papers say:

'Vernon Coleman writes as a general practitioner who has become disquieted by the all-pervasive influence of the pharmaceutical industry in modern medicine He describes, with a wealth of illustrations, the phenomena of modern latrogenesis, but he is also concerned about the wider harm which can result from doctors' and patients' preoccupation with medication instead of with the prevention of disease He demonstrates, all the more effectively because he writes in a sober, matter-of-fact style, the immense influence exercised by the drug industry on doctors' prescribing habits He writes as a family doctor who is keenly aware of the social dimensions of medical practice He ends his book with practical suggestions as to how medical care - in the developing countries as well as in the West - can best be freed from this unhealthy pharmaceutical predominance' -G M.Carstairs, The Times Literary Supplement {1975}

'What he says of the present is true and it is the great merit of the book that he says it from the viewpoint of a practising general practitioner, who sees from the inside what is going on, and is appalled by the consequences to the profession, and to the public' -~ Brian Inglis, Punch (1975)

'Dr Coleman writes with more sense than bias Required reading for any Minister of Health' - Daily Express

'I hope this book becomes a bestseller among doctors, nurses and the wider public' - Nursing Times

'Dr Coleman's well-coordinated book could not be more timely' — Yorkshire Post

'Few would disagree with Dr Coleman that more should be done about prevention' - The Lancet

'This short but very readable book has a message that is timely Vernon Coleman's point is that much of the medical research into which money and expertise are poured is useless At the same time, remedial conditions of mind and body which cause the most distress are largely neglected This is true' - Daily Telegraph

If you believe Dr Vernon Coleman, the main beneficiaries of the hundred million pounds worth of research done in this country each year are certainly not the

“aon belt at bouk 95%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

patients The research benefits mostly the medical place seekers, who use their academic investigations as rungs on the promotional ladder, or drug companies with an eye for the latest market opening The future may hold bionte superman but alla nation's physic cannot significantly change the basic mortality statistics except sometimes, to make them worse' - The Guardian

'Dr Coleman's well-coordinated book could not be more timely' — Yorkshire Post

'The Medicine Men is well worth reading' - Times Educational Supplement

'Dr Vernon Coleman is not a mine of information ~he is a fountain It pours out of him, mixed with opinions which have an attractive common sense ring about them.' - Coventry Evening Telegraph

'When the children have finished playing the games on your Sinclair or Commodore Vic 20 computer, you can turn it to more practical purposes, For what is probably Britain's first home doctor programme for computers is now available Dr Vernon Coleman, one of the country's leading medical authors, has prepared the text for a remarkable series of six cassettes called The Home Doctor Series Dr Coleman, author of the new book 'Bodypower' has turned his attention to computers' - The Times 1983

'The Medicine Men' by Dr Vernon Coleman, was the subject of a 14 minute 'commercial' on the BBC's Nationwide television programme recently Industry doctors and general practitioners come in for a severe drubbing two down and several more to go because the targets for Dr Coleman's pen are many, varied and, to say the least, surprising Take the physicians who carry out clinical tr-

als many of those, claims the author, have sold themselves to the industry and agreed to do research for rewards of one kind or another, whether that reward be

a trip abroad, a piece of equipment, a few dinners, a series of published papers or simply money' — The Pharmaceutical Journal

'By the year 2020 there will be a holocaust, not caused by a plutonium plume but by greed, medical ambition and political opportunism This 1s the latest vision of Vernon Coleman, an articulateand prolific medicalauthor this disturbing book

detects diseases in the whole way we deliver health care '—Sunday Times (1988)

"aon leten buak oG%,

THEIR "ERR FYING PLAN

' the issues explores he explores are central to the health of the nation' — Nursing Times

'It ts not necessary to accept his conclusion to be able to savour his decidedly trenchant comments on today's medicine a book to stimulate and to make one argue '— British Medical Journal

'As a writer of medical bestsellers, Dr Vernon Coleman's aim 1s to shock us out of ourcomplacency it'simpossible not to be impressed by some of his arguments ' - Western Daily Press

Controversial and devastating' — Publishing News

'Dr Coleman produces mountains of evidence to justify his outrageous claims'- Edinburgh Evening News

'Dr Coleman lays about him with an uncompromising verbal scalpel, dipped in vitriol, against all sorts of sacred medical cows '- Exeter Express and Echo

'Yernon Coleman writes bnilliant books '- The Good Book Guide

'No thinking person can ignore him This is why he has been for over 20 years one of the world's leading advocates on human and animal rights 1n relation to health Long may it continue' - The Ecologist

The calmest voice of reason comes from Dr Vernon Coleman '-— The Observer

Agodsend - Daily Telegraph

'Dr Vernon Colernan has justifiably acquired a reputation for being controversial, iconoclastic andinfluential '- General Practitioner

'Superstar' — Independent on Sunday

'Bniliant" - The People

‘Compulsive reading ’ - The Guardian

‘His message is important ’ - The Economist

‘He’s the Lone Ranger, Robin Hood and the Equalizer rolled into one’ — Glasgow Evening Times

Troi letein baak O74,

THEIR “ERR FYING PLAN

‘The man is a national treasure ’ — What Doctors Don’t Tell You

‘His advice is optimistic and enthusiastic ’ - British Medical Journal

‘Revered guru of medicine’ - Nursing Times

‘Gentle, kind and caring’ - Western Daily Press

‘His trademark is that he doesn’t mince words Far funnier than the usual tone of soupy piety you get from his colleagues ’ - The Guardian

‘Dr Coleman is one of our most enlightened, trenchant and sensitive dispensers of medical advice ’ — The Observer

‘Vernon Coleman is a leading medical authority and known to millions through his writing, broadcasting and bestselling books ’ - Woman's Own

‘His book Badiyapower is one of the most sensible treatises on personal survival that has ever been published ’ — Yorkshire Evening Post

‘One of the country's top health experts ’ - Woman's Journal

‘Dr Coleman is crusading for a more complete awareness of what is good and bad for our bodies In the course of that he has made many friends and some powerful enemies.’ - Western Morning News

‘Buthant ’ — The People

‘Dr Vernon Coleman is one of our most enlightened, trenchant and sensible dispensers of medical advice’ - The Observer

The most influential medical writer in Britain There can be little doubt that

Vernon Coleman is the people’s doctor ’ — Devon Life

The medical expert you can't ignore ’ - Sunday Independent

A literary genius ’ ~ HSL Newsletter

‘I would much rather spend an evening in his company than be trapped for five minutes in a radio commentary box with Mr Geoffrey Boycott’ — Peter Tinnis

wood, Punch

Troi letein baak O74,

THEIR ~ERR FYING PLAN

‘Hard hitting rmmutably forthnght ’ - Hull Daily Mail

‘Refreshingly forthright ’ - Liverpool Daily Post

‘Outspoken and alert’ - Sunday Express

‘The man witha mission ’ - Mormng News

‘A good read very funny and packed with interesting and useful advice ’-The Big Issue

‘Dr Coleman gains in stature with successive books’ - Coventry Evening Telegraph

‘Dr Coleman made me think again ’ - BBC World Service

‘‘Marvellously succinct, refreshingly sensible ’ - The Spectator

‘The living terror of the British medical establishment A doctor of science as well as a medical graduate Dr Coleman is probably one of the most bnihant men alive today His extensive medical knowledge renders him fearless ’ - Insh Times

‘His future as King of the media docs 1s assured ’ - The Independent

‘Britain’s leading medical author’ - The Star

‘Hts advice is practical and readable’ - Northern Echo

‘The layman’s champion’ -Evening Herald

‘All commonsense and no nonsense’ - Health Services Management

‘One of Britain’s leading experts ’ - Shmmer Magazine

‘The only three things | always read before the programme are Andrew Rawnsley in the Observer Peter Hitchens in the Maal and Dr Vernon Coleman 1n The Peo-ple Or, if I’m really up against it, just Vernon Coleman ’ - Eddie Mair, Presenter on BBC’s Radio Four

‘Dr Coleman 1s more illuminating than the proverbial lady with the lamp’- Com pany Magazine

‘Britain’s leading health care campaigner’ ~ The Sun

“am leltar bouk 23%,

THEIR ~ERF FYING PLAN

‘What he says is true’ - Punch

‘Perhaps the best known health writer for the general public in the world today’
- The Therapist

The patient’s champion The doctor with the common touch’ — Birmingham Post

‘A persuasive writer whose arguments, based on research and experience, are sound’ - Nursing Standard

‘Coleman is controversial but respected and has been described in the British press as ‘the sharpest mind in medical journalism’ and ‘the calmest voice of reason’ — Animals Today

‘Vernon Coleman rebel with a cause’ - Belfast Newsletter

presents the arguments against drug based medicine so well, and disturbs a harmful complacency so entertainingly’ — Alternative News

‘He is certainly someone whose views are impossible to ignore, with his passionate advocacy of human and animal rights’ - International Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine

‘The doctor who dares to speak his mind’ - Oxford Mail

‘Dr Coleman speaks openly and reassuringly’ — Oxford Times

‘He writes lucidly and wittily’ - Good Housekeeping

Tim letent book 99%,

THEIR “EPR FYING PLAN

Appendix 4: Reference Articles referring to Vernon Coleman (Included to counter some of the lies on the internet)

Ref 1

Volunteer for Kirkby’ - The Guardian, 14 5 1965

Ref 2

‘Bumbydom forced me to leave the NHS’ - Pulse, 28 11 1981

Ref 3

‘I’m Addicted To The Star’ - The Star, 10 3 1988

Ref 4

Medicine Becomes Computerized. Plug in Your Doctor - The Times 29 3 1983

Ref 5

‘Computer aided decision making in medicine’ - British Medical Journal, 89 1984 and 27 10 1984

Ref 6

Conscientious Objectors’ ~ Financial Times magazine, 9 8 2003

Ref 7

'Doctor with the Common Touch' - Birmingham Post, 9 10 1984

Ref 8

'Sacred Cows Beware Vernon Coleman publishing again' - The Scotsman, 6 12 1984

Ref 9

'Our Doctor Coleman Is Mustard'— The Sun, 29 6 1988

Ref 10

'Reading the mind between the lines' - BMA News Review, November 1991

Ref 11

Doctors' Firsts ~ BMA News Review 21 2 1996

Ref 12

'The big league of self publishing' - Daily Telegraph, 17 8 1996

Ref 13

'Doctoring the books' - Independent, 16 3 1999

Ref 14

'Sick Practices'— Ode Magazine, July/August 2003

Ref 15

'You have been warned, Mr Blair' - Spectator, 6 3 2004 and 20 3 2004

Ref 16

"about 29%,

THEIR "EPR FLYING PLAN

'Food for thought with a real live Maverick' - Western Daily Press, 5 9 2006

Ref 17

'The doctor will see you now' - Independent, 14 5 2008

There is a more comprehensive list of reference articles on www.vernoncoleman.com

Final Note from the Author:

If you found this book informative I would be very grateful if you would put a suitable review online. It helps more than you can imagine. If you disliked the book, or disapproved of it in any way, please forget you read it.
Vernon Coleman

~over 100%,